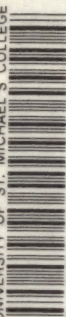


THE LIFE OF
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LIFE OF
THOMAS EDWARD BRIDGETT

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FATHER BRIDGETT AT THE AGE OF 68
(Two years before his Death)

Frontispiece

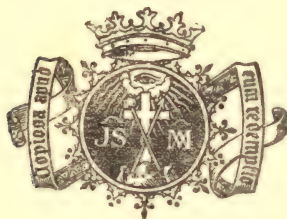
Life of Thomas Edward Bridgett

Priest of the Congregation of the Most
Holy Redeemer, with Characteristics from
his Writings

By CYRIL RYDER

Priest of the same Congregation

WITH A PREFACE BY THE
RIGHT REV. ABBOT GASQUET, O.S.B.



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“He sought profitable words, and wrote words most right and full of truth. The words of the wise are as goads and as nails deeply fastened in. . . . More than these, my son, require not. Of making many books there is no end ; and much study is an affliction of the flesh. Let us all hear together the conclusion of the discourse. Fear God, and keep His Commandments : for this is all man. And all things that are done, God will bring into judgment.”—ECCLES. xii. 10-14.



Veni Mater gratiæ,
Fons misericordiæ
Dona nos remedium.

Veni, lux Ecclesiæ,
Tristibus lætitiæ
Tu infunde radium.

Sis memor quod Angliæ
Dicta fuit Dos tua
Et tuum Imperium.

Salva Regnum Angliæ.
Ama dici patriæ
Dulce patrocinium.

AMEN.

Sarum Gradual.

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INTRODUCTION

By ABBOT GASQUET

THE Life of Father Bridgett, as told in the following pages, requires no introduction in the ordinary sense of the word. It will be found to be the simple, straightforward history of a holy priest, a fervent and exact Religious, a zealous missionary, a faithful friend, and a prudent Director of souls. To Catholics, of course, both in England and Ireland, for nearly half-a-century the name of Father Bridgett has been familiar by reason of his Missions and Retreats, whilst many a Religious House and Convent has treasured memories of the Spiritual Exercises he had at one time or other of his ministry conducted for them. To others who are not Catholics he was also known as a writer, mainly, perhaps, in the later years of his life, by his biographies of Blessed John Fisher and Blessed Sir Thomas More, which commanded the attention of the reading public as sound pieces of historical work.

The seventy years of Father Bridgett's pilgrimage on earth were mostly spent in the direct service of God. In the year 1850, at the age of twenty-one, he was converted to the Catholic faith, and im-

mediately joined the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, which is perhaps better known to most people as the "Redemptorists." The first six years of this period were passed in the seclusion of the noviciate and of the house of training abroad, and with the exception of the twelve years of great activity and usefulness spent in Ireland, almost the whole of Father Bridgett's life was devoted to work in England. It was a busy life, in the fullest sense of the word. As a missionary he was most successful, and his services were in great demand during all these years of active life, as the giving of Missions, and kindred work of that nature, was the chief function of the Order he had joined. In fact, he continued to serve his Master in this way, as we may learn from this biography, even after his growing infirmities did not allow him to stand without the support of surgical bandages round his legs and feet. And he persevered in this to within a very short period of his death, which took place on 17th February 1899.

So much it is almost necessary to state about Father Bridgett's life as a preface to what I am specially asked to treat of in this brief Introduction—namely, his work in its literary aspect. How, in the midst of the constant calls made upon him for Missions and Retreats, he found time to write at all must remain a mystery. The difficulty of understanding this, is hardly explained by the paradox, that those who have most to do have most time at their disposal. The fact remains, explain it how we may, that, although always fully occupied in the

missionary duties of his Order, Father Bridgett somehow managed to produce a number of books, tracts, and other literary work of an exceptionally high order of merit. The number and variety of these would be sufficient to occupy the time and energy even of a man able to devote himself well nigh altogether to literature. With Father Bridgett they were the outcome of little more than his recreations, and most certainly they were never allowed to occupy any time which in ordinary course belonged to other duties. A fact within my own knowledge will illustrate this strict adherence to rule, which made the preparation of his books more arduous to Father Bridgett than they might otherwise have been. During the years 1887 and 1888, when he was engaged on his "Life of Blessed John Fisher," I was brought into somewhat close personal relations with him, and I used to meet him constantly at the British Museum. He was always gentle and kind—that goes without saying—but he appeared anxious and flurried, and it was painful to see the strain which those expeditions put upon him physically. He had always the appearance of being in the greatest hurry, as, indeed, he generally was. The rule of his house at Clapham required him, as he told me, to be present at the midday meal. Consequently, whether he came in the morning and had to be back again, or started after the meal to get some work in before the closing of the manuscript-room, the distance that separated Clapham from Bloomsbury forced him to hurry far more than was good for him. I have again and

again seen him getting to his books with the perspiration streaming from his face, and in a state which would have made it out of the question for most people to do any good work. No doubt he could have made special arrangements for longer hours, but this is just what he would never do. He told me, more than once, that he would never let literary work, which was not contemplated in his ordinary rule, interfere with regular duties, or be the cause or excuse for asking for dispensations. I have often wondered how, in the conditions under which he worked, he was able to do so much and such excellent work. Someone, I think it was the late Father John Morris, S.J., remarked upon the rapidity with which Father Bridgett seemed to master the contents of a volume when it was put into his hands. This obviously must have been the case, or he never could have done what he did in the circumstances in which his life was cast.

It is perhaps fortunate that Father Bridgett's books did not necessitate any deep research among manuscripts. Had they done so their composition would have been impossible in his circumstances; but practically all the material he required was to be found in printed sources. Some of these printed books were, no doubt, very rare and precious, and some were only to be found in our national collections, but he had the somewhat rare gift of being able to interest others in the work he had in hand, and to get them to copy out whatever passages he required for his use, and even to go through great collections for him, and glean what was likely to serve

his purpose. When he was engaged on his "Life and Writings of Sir Thomas More," he told me that one kind friend had saved him the task of constantly going to the Museum Library to consult the rare works of More by obtaining for him a copy at which he could work at home. I remember, too, that when he was collecting for his book "Our Lady's Dowry," some time about 1872, he paid a visit to the Monastery of St Michael, Belmont, near Hereford. There his talk of what he was engaged upon so fascinated a young student Religious that he undertook to go through the "Acta Sanctorum" for him, and to cull from the Lives of the Saints examples to illustrate his thesis. This he did, and he has ever been grateful for an influence which led him thus young to explore the extensive fields of religious thought contained in that great collection of Saints' Lives.

Father Bridgett's method of work is obvious in almost all his books. He collects his facts or passages from the writings of the Fathers and Saints, and then marshals and arranges them so as to allow the facts to speak as far as possible for themselves, and with as little as possible added to them by way of argument. In hands like his, this is a most effective way of enforcing the truth; and Father Bridgett had a wonderful instinct, which led him to old Catholic books—pre-Reformation, and those printed in the days of persecution—to discover the passages he required. Wherever he went, giving Missions or Retreats, if there were a library or collection of books, he quickly found

his way thither, and was soon absorbed in the delight of hunting through the old volumes for anything unknown to him which might be useful for his purposes. He was not a collector of books in the ordinary sense of the term, or a bibliographer that searched out rare editions, and was concerned mainly with the print and paper and binding; but he was a bibliographer, so far as regarded the matter of the books, and he was always on the search for anything that might be of service to him in the composition of his own works. He was a collector of facts from old books which would serve to illustrate Catholic teaching and practice in the ages of faith. His vision of the Church was of the Church of the Middle Ages. In view of his subsequent attraction towards these "Middle Ages," it is of interest to know that what led him to the Church, whilst a student at St John's College, Cambridge, were books, not people, and precisely those books which pictured Catholicity in practice in pre-Reformation days. The first book to influence him was the account of the spiritual life of the Countess Margaret of Richmond, as told in Bishop Fisher's sermon at her funeral; and the second was Digby's "Compitum; or, The Meeting of Ways at the Catholic Church." In fact, the plan which Father Bridgett worked out so successfully in his "Dowry of Mary," the "History of the Holy Eucharist," and "The Ritual of the New Testament," etc., of gathering together and arranging the evidences for the belief and teaching of the past centuries in the Catholic Church, is the same

followed by Kenelm Digby in the series of books which include "The Broadstone of Honour," "Mores Catholici," and "Compitum"—books little read, I fear, by the present generation of readers.

The method of writing a book by arranging a series of selected passages would seem to be easy. In practice, however, it is by no means as simple as it looks to make such a book readable, and to present a clear and consecutive argument out of the material at hand. Father Bridgett takes us into his confidence as to this in his Introduction to the "History of the Holy Eucharist," which in one place he calls a book of quotations: a compilation from rare books (p. II). "And here," he says, "I must make a candid confession. I have been very often tempted to throw these notes aside, from a deep sense not only of my own incapacity to deal with so awful and mysterious a theme, but of the intrinsic inadequacy of the materials themselves to do justice to it, however skilfully they might be handled." He then goes on to illustrate his meaning by the example of a botanical collection, each specimen of which must appear to the man who has made the collection, and knows its history and the circumstance of its finding, to be so much more than it can ever be to the man who casually examines it; and he then proceeds: "I do not regret that my readers will never know, nor care to know, how many books I have searched to no purpose, or that one little fact told in three lines of text, or buried in a footnote, cost more labour—greater research—than a whole chapter of wider

interest—these are author's secrets, and belong to authors alone" (p. 9).

Whilst speaking of the "History of the Holy Eucharist," I cannot refrain from setting down here the excellent page in which Father Bridgett, with great force, protests against the use of the purely negative argument in history. Unfortunately, it is not infrequently used against Catholics most unjustly, and it is well to have at hand a passage so clearly put as this is, in order to turn the force of any such argument. "Let anyone," Father Bridgett says, "search through the five volumes called '*Annales Monastici*,' published by the Master of the Rolls, containing the chronicles of several large abbeys in different parts of England, and reaching through many hundred of years, he will not find even one page describing the daily service of the Church or the acts of piety of the monks. Why should the annalist describe what everyone knew and daily witnessed? It would have seemed as natural to chronicle the daily rising of the sun, and the effect of its rays upon the world. Indeed, there is a singular analogy between what is said of the weather and of the B. Sacrament. The annalists place on record how there was an earthquake throughout Europe in 1089; how a comet with two tails appeared in 1097, and mock suns in 1104; how at one time the Thames was almost dried up, and how at another it overflowed its banks; how thunder was heard on the feast of the Holy Innocents, 1249, whilst snow fell at the end of May, 1251. They tell of eclipses, murrains,

severe winters, droughts, signs and portents. But they never describe the verdure of spring, the genial heat of summer, the fruitfulness of autumn ; they never describe the full river flowing peacefully, or the midnight skies covered with brilliant stars. In the same way, if a church is burnt in an incursion of the enemy, if a murder is committed within the walls of the Sanctuary, if the Sacred Vessels are stolen from the altar, if the holy rites cease during an interdict, such events are chronicled. But the daily service of the Church, the fervent communions, the prayers poured out before the altar, the acts of faith and charity—all these, as a matter of course, are scarcely heeded ” (p. 7).

In “ The Ritual of the New Testament ” Father Bridgett deprecates any ridicule of belief, no matter how strange, and even absurd, it may appear. No possible good is to be got from this method of treating error or endeavouring to remove prejudice. This is most sound. We have to remember that, as a first step towards convincing those that differ from us, we have to remove prejudice. This was Father Bridgett’s first desire. “ It is to the removal of prejudice,” he says, “ that my efforts are directed ; I speak to the prejudiced, but I speak not to the obstinate. If there is anyone who ‘ rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth,’ to him I address myself. As for men who are determined to think evil of us, on them argument would be thrown away ” (p. 7).

Father Bridgett then goes on to quote a passage from Lord Bacon against the “ immodest and de-

formed manner of writing—whereby matter of religion is handled in the style of the stage,” and declares that his principles are exactly those expressed thus by the Lord Chancellor. But he added that it was of course impossible for him to look upon Christianity as so many now do—“like the Poles of the earth, known indeed to exist, but as yet undiscovered.”

He tells us himself that he was naturally an “investigator”: he was fond of it, and it gave him a pleasure to be hunting for old books or through them; to be “cinder-sifting,” as it has been called, in order to find some precious speck of gold in the mass of dust-covered material of little value or interest. “To the present writer,” he says, in his Introduction to the “Life of Blessed John Fisher”—“To the present writer no books are of such living interest as the great volumes of State papers.” But although he delighted in “investigation,” he was by no means merely an “investigator.” In his humility, he once declared that he “had no talent for narration,” but, however rarely the two gifts are found together, those who know Father Bridgett’s two biographies of Fisher and More will find evidences of a gift for historical “narration,” and skill in the presentment of facts in a clear, lucid, and yet rhetorical style, which must place him high in the ranks of historical writers.

I have, I hope, said sufficient, in this necessarily brief Introduction, to express my own appreciation of the services that Father Bridgett has rendered by his literary work to the Catholic body. The

books he has left us are storehouses of facts ready for use. It is to be hoped that they will not be neglected, but that the precious material he collected with such care, diligence, and devotion may be utilised and made popular.

PREFACE

THOSE to whose judgment the writer feels bound to defer have decided that the present *Life of Father Bridgett*, which was at first written only for private circulation, should be published.

He is intimately conscious of its many shortcomings, but he has been encouraged by the following words of Cardinal Newman :—"Good is never done except at the expense of those who do it ; truth is never enforced except at the sacrifice of its propounders. At least they expose their own inherent imperfections if they incur no other penalty ; for nothing would be done at all if a man waited till he could do it so well that no one could find fault with it. What, then, can I desire or pray for but this, that what I say well may be blessed to those who hear it, and that what I might have said better may be blessed to me, by increasing my own dissatisfaction with myself."

If these words could be verified in the case of the greatest of authors, they may surely serve as a humble encouragement to the least.

The writer wishes to return his sincere thanks to the Right Rev. Abbot Gasquet for kindly consenting to write the Introduction ; to Messrs

Burns & Oates and Messrs Kegan Paul & Co. for liberty to quote from certain of Father Bridgett's published writings, as well as to all those who have assisted him by lending letters, or in any other way.

LIFE OF FATHER BRIDGETT

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE

THOMAS EDWARD BRIDGETT was born in Derby, on January 20, 1829. Fortunately, we have from his own hand an intimate record of his early life, begun in the year 1886.

“In beginning this sketch of my life,” he writes, “I am moved by two motives. First, in our Congregation an obituary notice must be written of deceased *confrères*.¹ I hope to die *in sinu congregationis*. Now I have often noticed the great difficulty there is, when a *confrère* dies, in gathering the facts of his life. The impression that he has made is easy enough to record ; the facts have to be gathered from many sources, and some remain unknown and uncertain. My first motive, then, in the following sketch is to spare the pains of the chronicler charged with my obituary notice. So, my dear *confrère*, unknown to me now, who will not read this till after my death, I salute you, and thank you for the care you are taking of my memory ;

¹ In the early years those who joined the Redemptorist Congregation in England went to a noviciate abroad, where the term *confrère* was in common use. The term brother is appropriated to those who are not priests.

and, if I am saving you some labour, please say a *De profundis* and a few *Aves* for my soul. I will certainly pray for you.

“My second motive is personal. The review I am going to make will help me to recall my sins and my folly and my waste of time, and also the mercies of God. These reflections I hope to make as I proceed; but *I shall not write them down*. This will not be a book of confessions. I have troubled confessors enough with my sins; I will not burden the poor chronista.

“If I do not write to humble myself, neither is it to glorify myself. I shall put down in all simplicity the few little works God has allowed me to do. They are not many, nor illustrious in themselves. Yet they are far more numerous and honourable than befitted so poor a wretch; and they have all been full of imperfections, and worse, in the execution. *Omnia male fecit* might be my epitaph.

“I was born on January 20, 1829, in a house attached to my father’s silk mill in Derby. I was the third child of Joseph Bridgett and Mary Bridgett (*née* Gregson). My father’s ancestors seem to have lived in Derbyshire, about Congleton. My mother was born in Manchester, and her people were of Lancashire and Yorkshire.”

It was a subject of satisfaction to him in after years, as a Catholic, to remember that his parents’ Christian names were Joseph and Mary. Other consolations he had: “My eldest brother, Charles, was received into the Catholic Church and baptised

at St Mary's, Clapham, in August 1877, when he was fifty-one years old." He died, October 2, 1884, at East Sheen, Surrey, aged fifty-eight, and was buried in the Mortlake Catholic cemetery, in which Father Bridgett himself was afterwards buried. His second brother, Gregson, also became a Catholic, in 1850, the year of his own conversion. This brother died at Birkdale, February 27, 1888, and was buried in the Catholic cemetery there. He had one sister, and three younger brothers, the youngest, Ronald—in whom he took a special interest—acting for several years as English Consul in Buenos Ayres. After his last visit to England, and to his brother, who was then Rector of the Redemptorist House of Studies at Teignmouth, he returned to his post, and had the unpleasant and irksome duty of watching Jabez Balfour, who had fled from justice and established himself at Salta, several hundred miles north-west of Buenos Ayres. There Mr Bridgett had to remain some months, till Jabez Balfour's arrest and extradition. His health failing, he shortly after resigned his post. Before leaving for home he remained a few weeks arranging his affairs, and the day before Father Bridgett's death he went out to bathe, and was drowned. Father Kenelm Vaughan, brother to the Cardinal, who was at Buenos Ayres at the time, unaware of Father Bridgett's death, wrote giving him an account of the sad event, and speaking in high terms of his deceased brother. Of Father Bridgett's immediate family his sister Mary was the only one to survive him.

The autobiographical note continues: "I was not baptised in my infancy, nor were any of my brothers. My father had been brought up in the sect of the Baptists (*i.e.* Anti-pædobaptists), and though he did not follow that sect when I knew him he retained (I suppose) some of their negative notions. My mother was brought up a Unitarian, and, though she did not frequent Unitarian places of worship during my father's lifetime, she agreed with him in the negation of baptism for children. It might have been happy for me had I not been baptised at all till my reception into the Church. But it was otherwise. I was baptised at the age of sixteen, as I will relate presently.

"My father was a silk manufacturer. My grandfather had been a poor man, and had made a considerable fortune. He built a large silk mill in Derby, and a house near Derby on the Duffield road, which he called the Grove. I think my father went to the Baptist chapel while we lived in Bridge Street, but after his removal to the Grove the family frequented the parish church of Darley, so that my first associations of a religious kind were with the Church of England. But all that I can remember of that place is the yew-tree in the churchyard, the high pew, and the hatchments hanging in the church.

"For three months at the end of 1836 I was at the seaside at Hastings, whither my mother was sent for her health. There were then no railroads to London, and we posted all the way by the Great North Road, by easy stages. I do not remember

any religious impression at that early period, but though I was not yet eight years old I read with absorbing interest "Robinson Crusoe." I had lessons at home from a governess, and in Latin from a master.

"When eight years old I was sent with my elder brothers to school at Mill Hill, near Hendon, in Hertfordshire. This is a large school (still in existence) belonging to the Independents. They had a meeting-house of their own—a dismal place, and I have dismal recollections of Sunday worship and of a catechism called 'New Proof.' We went to school by coach from Derby.

"In 1837 my parents left Derby for London, and while they were looking for a suitable house we lived, from August 1837 to February 1838, at 2 Frederick Place, Brixton Rise. I was not then going to school, I forget why. My father purchased a large house and grounds at Colney Hatch, near Barnet, Hertfordshire. There is now a great lunatic asylum called by that name, but while I lived there—from 1838 to 1845—Colney Hatch was a beautiful village, consisting of a few gentlemen's houses and those of their retainers.

"In 1839 I was sent to a very different school, in Worksop, Nottinghamshire, kept by a Swiss named Heldenmaier. It was conducted on the system of Pestalozzi. In fact, it was a delusion and a snare—one of those schemes by which foreigners humbug Englishmen. It was, however, a pleasant school, and frequented by boys whose parents were well off. We went once on Sunday to the Anglican church,

and had an odious task to perform in the afternoon—namely, to write a report of the sermon we had heard. As this was a miserable dry affair, of which I understood nothing, it helped me to hate religion. The church was an old Catholic church—an Abbey church I think—Norman in character, and a very fine building; but, whitewashed, neglected, and stuffed full of pews, it made no good impression on me, and I do not remember that my mind ever reverted to its former use. A young ladies' school used to sit round inside the Communion rails, the mistresses laying their muffs on the Communion table. The boys were dreadfully immoral. The headmaster was a Rationalist, and if we asked him any question concerning religion he gave us no positive teaching. I rather prided myself on not being baptised, because it made me different from others, and I boasted of it, and defended it. Some other boys quoted against me the words of our Lord: 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God' (John iii. 5). We referred the question to the master, and he replied: 'People differ on these matters: when you are older you will judge for yourselves.'

"I do not remember that I had any good sentiments while at that school, or ever said any real prayer.

"In 1842 my father took me to Boulogne and Paris. I do not remember that the Catholic churches, which I must have seen, made any impression on me.

“In 1843, at the age of fourteen, I was sent to my third school, at Tonbridge, in Kent. This is a public school, formerly an old-fashioned Church of England Grammar School, though originally founded by a Catholic.

“The headmaster, Dr Weldon, a parson, was a worthy man, to whom I owe much. He tried to govern it on the Rugby system of Dr Arnold, but, like all Protestant systems, it is ineffectual for real moral good. The boys were abominably wicked. Still, the master had some good influence, and while at that school I felt for the first time religious impressions, and came to think of God and my soul. I went one day to him and told him I was not baptised, and wished to be. He gave me some instruction, and allowed me the use of a private room and some leisure time in the evenings to prepare for baptism. It was a strange preparation. I read ‘Tomline on the Thirty-Nine Articles,’ and got entangled in the article on Predestination—read over and over again the discussion that Milton puts into Almighty God’s mouth on that subject. (Is it Chateaubriand or De Maistre that says Milton makes God talk like a divine at the Synod of Dordrecht ?)

“However, I meant well, and was baptised in Tonbridge Parish Church on March 20, 1845, being sixteen years old. My father and mother came for the occasion, and Dr Weldon was my godfather and Mrs Weldon my godmother.

“Alas! baptism is not enough by itself, amid bad influences, example, and passions, in the per-

plexities of Protestant doctrines. Whether I had the disposition necessary to receive the grace of God I do not know. I was quite in earnest at the time, and believed explicitly what is necessary and implicitly whatever God had revealed; and I was sorry for my sins, and meant to lead a good life—so that I think I may have been justified. The water was only sprinkled, but the probabilities are in favour of the validity of the Sacrament.

“From that day I never lost for any considerable time interest in religious questions; but passion and evil example carried me away; and when I wished to return to God *I did not know how*.

“In August 1845 I went up the Rhine as far as Coblentz and Mayence and Frankfort. Being now strictly Anglican, by Dr Weldon’s influence, I remember being rather shocked at a remark made by my father, that ‘Catholics make much more of Jesus Christ than we do.’ I also made a visit to Cambridge, where I was to go on leaving school, and through the fens of Lincolnshire. On August 1, 1846 my father died suddenly of apoplexy.”

Father Bridgett’s school companion, the Rev. A. H. Hore, gives a picture of him in his boyhood: “He was one of my most intimate friends at Tonbridge, and went to Cambridge the year before I went to Oxford. He was one who could do everything; one of the best at all games at school; a wonderful swimmer, and anyone who knew the lasher into which it was his delight to plunge would know what that means.”

He adds that he did not at that time “excel in

Latin and Greek, nor hold a high place in the school, for the reason that he was always reading a different kind of literature, books of a deep character, which brought forth their fruits in his after life, but which formed little part of the school routine. He was a thoroughly conscientious man, and I have no doubt that his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church was founded on firm conviction, and was the result of the learning which he began, and of which I remember *now* he gave proof, in his early years."

CHAPTER II

CONVERSION

FATHER BRIDGETT tells us that his father's death was a great blow to his family financially : " My mother had to reduce her expenditure. We gave up our carriages and horses, etc., and went to live at 3 Great Coram Street, Russell Square. However, I still continued at school at Tonbridge, and my mother found herself able to make me a sufficient allowance (about £200 a year) to study at Cambridge. I went to the university in October 1847, and remained three years. I was at St John's College, the foundation of Lady Margaret and Cardinal Fisher."

It is well to recall here Father Bridgett's words, written many years after, in his Preface to the " Life of Blessed John Fisher," which show the influence the martyr exercised even at that early date over his future biographer :

" When, just forty years ago, I entered the refectory or hall of St John's College, Cambridge, my attention was at once arrested by the portrait of the foundress, Lady Margaret, mother of Henry VII., and of her confessor, John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester ; and the quaint rebus of a fish and an ear [of corn] in the coat-of-arms of the latter, in the chapel window, somewhat distracted my mind amid

psalms and prayers. I wished at once to know something of those worthies, and as the senior tutor of my college, Dr Hymers, had reprinted Fisher's funeral sermon of Lady Margaret, with notes, I was soon able not so much to satisfy as to excite still more my curiosity. It was certainly not the intention of the editor, a clergyman of the Protestant Church of England, that the perusal of his reprint should lead any student of St John's College a step back to the Catholicity of Bishop Fisher. Yet such was the case. I soon purchased a copy of the first edition of Fisher's first treatise against Luther printed in 1523, and, without entering very deeply into controversy, I received a deep impression of the violence and malice of the Reformers, and a gentle drawing towards the defenders of the old Faith, which all subsequent studies increased. Though I read no more of Fisher's writings at the time, his spotless character and heroic death gave weight to other arguments, which made me refuse the Oath of Royal Supremacy then required for a degree."

On a later occasion, in answer to an address from the Confraternity of the Holy Family, Father Bridgett relates an interesting anecdote, which shows how God sometimes makes the smallest and apparently most trivial accident a channel of special grace. In the address reference was made to his having been once a Protestant. Father Bridgett, after replying to the main part of the address, added the following words :—"As regards the Faith, it is true that my parents were not Catholics, and

I was not educated in the knowledge of Christian truth as it was taught by the Apostles, and has been ever believed by the Catholic Church. But I was born in the year in which O'Connell won Emancipation for Catholics subject to the English crown, and I was only twenty-one years old when God's grace emancipated me from the much greater misery and slavery of error. Since then more than thirty-one years have passed, and I have seen more reason every year and every day to thank God for that deliverance. This is not the time or place to dwell on such a subject. I will merely say that among the causes that led me toward the Church were some very simple words spoken by a poor Irish labourer. I was then studying at the University of Cambridge, and a fellow-student had invited me to visit the Catholic chapel. It was a very small building in an obscure street in the suburbs of the town, and we had some difficulty in finding it. We got the keys from a poor Catholic man, who lived near, and after we had looked at the church, my friend, who was fond of a joke, began to banter the poor Irishman. 'Why, Paddy, he said, 'do you think you've got the truth all to yourselves down in this little back street, and all our learned doctors and divines in this University are in error?' The answer that Paddy gave was this: 'Well, sir, I suppose they're very learned, but they can't agree together, while we are all one.' I often thought of that answer, and the more I thought of it the more wisdom did I see in it. And now that I have been a Catholic over

thirty years, and have read many books, and seen many countries and many men, I see the force of that answer better and better. Yes; if infidels or heretics could but agree together, they would overwhelm us with their objections, their learning, their power, and their wealth. But they have the curse of Babel on them. They can't agree together. They can't understand each other's speech. Therefore they can't unite to build up anything, or even to pull down the Church that God has built. Whereas, as Paddy said, Catholics are all one. *We* can understand each other. You may travel where you like, the world over, and have but to ask for the Catholic church to be sure to hear the same doctrine you learnt in your catechism at home, and to see the same sacraments administered that you and your forefathers received, the same Holy Mass celebrated of which the prophet Malachias foretold more than 2000 years ago that it should be offered from the rising to the setting of the sun. I have felt the force of that word 'we are one' more than you can do, having travelled in many countries, with different tongues and customs, and found Catholics everywhere the same, and conversed and associated and laboured with priests from all parts of the world. It is to this wonderful unity of the Catholic Faith and communion that I owe it that I do not find myself a stranger in Ireland."

Father Bridgett's autobiographical note contains the following account of his conversion :—

"My purpose in going to the University was to become a clergyman of the Church of England. I

had not been long at Cambridge when I found myself carried about in the vortex of theological discussions—Low Church or Evangelicism and High Church or Puseyism, raged against one another. I was acquainted with youths of both parties, and with senior members of the University of both parties; but was more drawn to the High Church.

“I read books of all kinds, and was fairly puzzled. Newman’s written sermons struck me much, and still more Manning’s, though they cleared up nothing for me. Then I came upon the Broad Church—Arnold, Maurice—and was fascinated with the peculiar, impressive style of Carlyle, from which, however, I could not gain any clear views.

“But the day of grace for me was when I picked up in my bookseller’s shop a volume, just come out, by Kenelm Digby. This was the first volume of ‘*Compitum*.’ The name, the title, even the little black cross on the title-page, seemed so strange that I bought it, and had not read many pages when I felt myself in a new world. I felt I must know more about the writer, and asked information—got at the history of his conversion—purchased his ‘*Broadstone of Honour*,’ and even got at the first Anglican edition of that book, and compared it with the others.

“From that day my heart was with the Church of the Saints. I hated the isolation and insularity of the Church of England, and felt it was a mere sham. Yet there were many difficulties to be overcome, and I had no one to help me. I did not know a Catholic in the world beyond the very slightest

acquaintance with a lady (Miss Butler), the sister of the curate of Friern Barnet (the parish church of Colney Hatch), who had married the Catholic architect, Mr Wardell. But I never had a conversation with her. I do not think that, till the day I was received into the Church, I ever met a Catholic, even accidentally in society. I had only once or twice gone inside Catholic chapels in England. I understood nothing, and was in no way impressed. I knew absolutely nothing of the Catholics in England. Of Irish Catholics I knew no more than what I had read in Lever's novels about drinking priests and ignorant, rollicking laymen.

"When at last I asked to be received into the Church the only vision I had before my eyes was the Church of the Middle Ages, with which I believed the modern Church to be identical, and that the Church of the Middle Ages was the legitimate development of the Apostolic Church.

"I had read a good deal—dipped here and there into the Fathers—St Cyril of Jerusalem, St Augustine, St Chrysostom. I had read Wiseman's essays in the *The Dublin Review*, and many other articles; Newman's essay on Development, Rock's 'Hierurgia,' etc. etc. All had not become clear, but at the end of my third year at Cambridge I felt that the time had come to decide. If I returned to the University after the vacation it would be to take my degree. But I could not take a degree then without taking the Oath of Supremacy, repudiating the power of the Pope. With my actual leaning to the Catholic Church I felt it would be a wicked and shameless

thing to take such an oath. So when I went home for the vacation in June 1850 I said to some companions : ‘ It is not likely that I shall ever return to Cambridge, but if I do I shall be a thorough Protestant, not a High Church Anglican.’

“ When I reached home my mother was away, and I had some leisure. Dr Newman’s ‘ Sermons to Mixed Congregations ’ had been lately published, and I had purchased them. I was much struck by his sermon on Faith—what it was when our Lord was on earth—a surrender of the mind to a living authority, known to be divine, not a puzzle over documents, with doubt about correct interpretation ; that, if Faith means now what it meant then, it could not be doubt, and balance of probabilities, but must be surrender to a living Teacher. I knew enough about the Catholic Church to accept her as that Divine Teacher, though much of her teaching was a great puzzle to me.

“ Thus I was brought to a practical question : Could I submit or not ? Of course there were worldly motives enough against submitting. It would greatly grieve my mother, would alienate my relations, would affect my future career, but I do not remember that these things in any way weighed with me. I had more struggle with intellectual doubts than with human motives. The doctrine of the Real Presence was a great difficulty. It was so amazing ! Had God really revealed it ? Did the early Church believe it ? I read St Augustine’s sermon on the sixth chapter of St John over and over again, and I could not be sure whether he taught

it or not. St Cyril of Jerusalem seemed to be quite clear. I felt I could only receive the solution of my doubts from a living and divine authority. The words of Macaulay haunted me, that I was about to be guilty of a folly, of the height of folly and credulity. I felt also that such a belief involved a total separation from modern English life and ways of thinking. Yet I felt also, intensely, that these English ways, and the scepticism of Macaulay and the denials of Carlyle, were utterly contrary to the spirit of the Bible, both New Testament and Old.

“One day I went to the Church of the Jesuits in Farm Street. I was alone in the church. I saw the lamp burning in the Sanctuary, and knew its meaning. I said to myself: ‘Is this true or not? Ought I to accept it or not? If it is true I ought at once to kneel and adore.’ I did not kneel. I did not feel *sure* that I should. I do not remember that I prayed.¹

¹ The late Mr Henry Wilberforce, when speaking of his conversion, said that until he actually made his submission to the Church, though intellectually convinced, difficulties of all kinds would come to his mind, but once he had made that act of submission they vanished, and never troubled him again. We see the same in Father Bridgett’s case. As we shall see later, it was especially the Church’s doctrine about the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament which drew him into the true Church, and yet, though intellectually convinced, until he made the act of submission to the Church’s teaching, he was assailed with doubts. The following words of Cardinal Newman are to the point:—“Faith is not a mere conviction in reason, it is a firm assent . . . wrought in the mind by the grace of God, and by it alone. As men may be convinced and not act according to their conviction, so may they be convinced and not believe according to their conviction. . . . Their reason is convinced, and their doubts are moral ones, arising in their root from a fault of the will. In a word, the arguments for

"Just then Dr Newman was giving his 'Lectures on the Difficulties of Anglicans' in the chapel of the London Oratorians, King William Street, Strand. I think one was given each week. I attended some of them, and then made up my mind. I went to the house of the Oratorians, and asked to see Father Faber. He was away, or ill. I asked for another. Father Stanton¹ came, and I stammered out that I wished to be a Catholic. I was alarmed when the words were spoken. He gave me no instructions, but told me to come next day and make my confession. I did so, and I made my abjuration in the chapel before the side altar, and was conditionally baptised.

"This was June 12, 1850. I was twenty-one years old.

religion do not compel anyone to believe, just as arguments for good conduct do not compel anyone to obey. Obedience is the consequence of willing to obey, and faith is the consequence of willing to believe. . . . It requires no act of faith to assent to the truth that two and two make four; we cannot help assenting to it; and hence there is no merit in assenting to it; but there is merit in believing that the Church is from God; for though there are abundant reasons to prove it to us, yet we can, without an absurdity, quarrel with the conclusion; we may complain that it is not clearer, we may suspend our ascent, we may doubt about it, if we will, and grace alone can turn a bad will into a good one." From this we can see the mistake which persons outside the Church sometimes make when they think they must wait until all difficulties have vanished. Faith is not only an act of the intellect, but likewise of the will. When once they have sufficient evidence to show them that they can prudently accept the Church as God's messenger, and that they cannot without sinful imprudence reject her teaching, they are bound to submit to her authority, as they would to our Lord Himself were He still upon earth.

¹ Father Stanton survived Father Bridgett almost two years, dying January 1, 1901. *R.I.P.*

“ I remember that when I went out into the crowds in the Strand, with my shirt front still wet with the baptismal water, I felt inclined to laugh for very joy, and to say to the people : ‘ Now I am no longer a member of your petty Anglican religion. I belong to the Church of the Apostles, the Fathers, and the Saints. St Francis and St Dominic would not disown me, and when I go across the sea I shall not be a stranger in Christendom.’ ” (He added shortly before his death : “ More than forty years have passed since then, and the same thought and joy are as fresh as ever.”)

“ I am not attempting here to give any proper account of my inner life ; so I will say no more about the history of my conversion than that the main thought that led me to the Faith has been developed in my ‘ Ritual of the New Testament,’ in the chapter on the Real Presence. It was this : ‘ If there is a living God, such as the Bible tells us of, then the Catholic Church is God’s dwelling-place, and God’s organ on earth. Or conversely : If the Catholic Church is to be rejected, *a fortiori* is the Bible. In two things I was certain they agreed—namely, in the view they took about God, the *living* God ; and secondly, in the view about the life of man—the ascetic view, I may call it.

“ God was a *living God*, not a theory, nor an abstract first cause, nor law and order, but a God who made known His will. His will was the law of life, and man must *mortify* his own will to do God’s will. I often read ‘ The Imitation of Christ ’ and ‘ The Spiritual Combat.’ I was sure they held the same

view of life as the New Testament. I was sure Protestantism did not, nor the English newspapers, nor the English people as a body."

As Father Bridgett tells us that what led him to the true Faith is contained in his "Ritual of the New Testament" it will be a suitable conclusion to this account of his conversion if we consider in the following chapter the argument he there developed.

CHAPTER III

HIS "ROAD TO ROME"

No one will be able to read the chapter on the Real Presence in "The Ritual of the New Testament" without being struck with the author's power of discovering the rich treasures concealed beneath the surface of Holy Scripture. Our admiration increases when we remember that Father Bridgett has himself told us that it is but the development of ideas which filled his mind before he became a Catholic and gradually drew him into the one Fold. He takes a grasp of the whole end and object of Holy Scripture which is worthy of Bossuet. The Bible is to him but one book, with one Author, who is God, with but one end—the revelation of God's loving dealings with man, both when he was innocent, and during his gradual restoration to the dignity he had lost. He sees how God's plan never changed, but was from the first a plan of love, and therefore of union; how all that preceded the Incarnation was a promise and figure of that great mystery, and that the true Church, which is the result, could not possibly be the desolation of Protestantism; that as Our Lord told His Apostles that it was good for them and for the world that He should leave them with His visible presence, for what would follow would be something better,

nothing could be adequate to fulfil that promise but His perpetual presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is at once the worship, the dignity, and the treasure of the one true Catholic Church. To him the whole revelation as contained in Holy Scripture was one vast Temple of Truth, whose Builder is God, and every portion of which is in perfect harmony with the rest. This has been beautifully illustrated under the figure of a Gothic cathedral. The rising sun pours its rays through the east window with many colours, and, resting on the rood-screen, casts the shadow of the Cross and Passion of Our Lord down the whole length of the church, even to the very entrance. So do we find the figures and promises of the Incarnation and Redemption throughout the books of Scripture, from Genesis to the Gospels. Those who enter that vast and beautiful Temple of Truth in the light of Faith are led on from figure to figure till they reach the sanctuary, and behold the perfect fulfilment of our Saviour's promise : " Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

In the Introduction Father Bridgett refutes Macaulay's two theories for explaining why wise men, like Sir Thomas More, have believed, do, and will believe, in the Real Presence. Father Bridgett shows that the first theory is self-contradictory, while the second contradicts the first, and is itself contradicted by facts.¹

¹ How useful this refutation is will be apparent when we remember that on Lord Ripon's conversion *The Times* had nothing better to offer as an explanation than the second of Macaulay's theories above alluded to.

After refuting Dr Robert Vaughan's attempted explanation of the same, he ends by quoting a famous passage from Newman beginning : " Catholics at least have a lively illustration and evidence of the absurdity of Protestant private judgment as exercised on the Apostolic writings in the visible fact of its absurdity as exercised on themselves."

Then he passes to his main point, which is an argument from analogy. Marvels lose their strangeness by being multiplied. It is easier for faith to grasp two miracles in harmony than one in isolation. Though the Real Presence has no parallel it has many harmonious and analogous facts in both the New and Old Testament. Those who believe in water being changed into wine at Cana, and in the Body of Jesus Christ walking on the sea, transfigured, and passing through the sealed tomb and the closed doors, ought to find little *strangeness* in its presence beneath the species of bread and wine. Those who believe in the long series of marvels in the Old Testament ought to be so well prepared to accept the marvels of the Catholic Church that the absence of such marvels would be a far greater perplexity to them than their presence.

He then goes on to point out a most important truth, which strikes at the root of the errors of those for whose special benefit he writes. They hold that as we get more spiritual we cease to have any need of sensible signs of God's presence or of His love ; but Father Bridgett shows that even while man was in his state of innocence and happiness he was

honoured by the visits of His Creator, and by visible sensible manifestations of His presence.

Sin interrupted this loving intercourse. God still sought His erring creature, but man fled from Him. For many ages the apparitions of God were few and rare. Yet still the human race knew that God had not entirely deserted it : that there were some favoured souls to whom God appeared, and by whom He sent messages to them of warning, of love, of mercy ; but still there was no permanent, sensible presence of God upon earth.

As, however, the “fulness of time” drew nearer this great gift was bestowed more liberally. “God chose for Himself a peculiar people, and His perpetual, visible presence was to be at once their bond of unity, their strength, their consolation, and their glory.”

The mighty apparition on Mount Sinai was the inauguration of the perpetual, sensible presence of God among men. God orders Moses to make the ark, with its mercy-seat of purest gold, covered with the wings of the two cherubim, whence God promised to speak, and when all things were complete “the cloud covered the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled it,” “the majesty of the Lord shining.” From that day God was said to sit between the Cherubim, and for ages the history of the Jews is in great measure the history of the ark.

St Paul teaches that everything in the history of the Jews was a figure of what we are to possess in the Christian dispensation. Hence, as the Jews had

their *Shechinah*, or permanent, sensible Presence of God in the Temple, and also their sacrifices, whereby they worshipped that Divine Presence, so in the true Church we must have, only in a far more perfect manner, our permanent, sensible Divine Presence in our tabernacles, and an infinitely perfect sacrifice. When our Divine Lord came He fulfilled all types in His own person, and He was at once the Presence and the Sacrifice. He was the God-Man—as God the object of our supreme adoration, and as Man our Priest and Victim to God. So in His Church we must find the Presence and the Sacrifice united. As St Paul tells us, Our Lord has now become a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech, because, before He left the world, He brought forth bread and wine, and changing them into His Body and Blood said : “Do this for a commemoration of Me.”

“There needs no more a succession of bleeding victims; which by their very multitude testify to their impotence. A Victim offered once for all on Calvary has wrought for us a perfect Redemption. The same Victim, offered in an unbloody manner a million times, testifies to the exhaustless nature of that Redemption which He is ever applying to the world.”

One more point emphasised by Father Bridgett shows the perfection of Our Lord's Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. When Our Lord became man, the Presence of God was more real than it had ever been before. Now men could see and hear and touch the infinite, eternal God. Yet, on the other

hand, God's Presence was more hidden and mysterious. Formerly the apparitions of God's presence were such that disbelief was impossible, as in the appearance of God on Sinai. But when the Son of God became Man many saw Him and yet believed that He was merely man. As Our Lord "stood in the midst of men, and they did not know that He was near them ; so too men are often in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and they do not know that God is near them, in the greatest prodigy of His power and love. Again, Jesus was pointed out to men ; yet many, even when told that He was the Son of God, disbelieved it, and they despised Him, and struck Him, and spat on Him, and put Him to death. So, too, it is preached that Jesus is in the Blessed Sacrament, and many when they hear it disbelieve and scoff ; and often they have gone so far as to outrage the Blessed Sacrament and trample it under their feet. And yet, though they laugh us to scorn for saying so, they will one day find that they were trampling under foot the Lord of glory and the God of love quite as truly as the Jews crucified Him ; with this difference, however, that then He suffered, now He is beyond the reach of man's malice ; He can suffer no longer, however much men may outrage the veils of bread and wine behind which He lies concealed."

Father Bridgett towards the end has these beautiful words : " The Holy Eucharist is the noblest of the sacraments, and the end to which the others lead. It is the life of the whole ecclesiastical year. It is the victim in the daily sacrifice at which all

assemble. It is the fountain of the Church's poetry. It is the source of the love and adoration which built those mighty cathedrals at which the modern world wonders. And yet this external memorial, which is the central point of everything external, is itself pre-eminently the *mystery of Faith*. Faith, then, is the keystone of the whole arch of Catholic ritualism. Alas for the clever but sceptical essayist who could scoff at such a mystery! Happy the gay but earnest-hearted Chancellor, who could lay down his life for such a faith!"

Happy, we may add, was Father Bridgett, who could make the sacrifice of all that was dearest to him in order to enter into the Catholic Church, which to him was the home of the Blessed Sacrament, the true House of God.¹

¹ The writer hopes that his readers will not rest content with the above slight sketch of Father Bridgett's argument, but will read the "Ritual of the New Testament" and especially the chapter on the Real Presence.

CHAPTER IV

A REDEMPTORIST

THOMAS BRIDGETT, having been received into the Church when he was twenty-one years old, faithfully corresponded with God's light, and deeply meditated on the end for which God created man. "Having become a Catholic," he says, "I felt at once that I could most directly and effectually attain the end of life by entering a Religious Order."

He goes on to tell us that he had read in *The Dublin Review* an article on Father de Ravignan's pamphlet on the Jesuit Institute. He was particularly struck by what is there said about Retreats, and how well they are adapted for discovering one's vocation. This made him ask Father Stanton if it were possible to make a Retreat in England. He replied that a Father of theirs was then making one at Hanley Castle, a house of the Redemptorists, under Father Lans. Father Stanton wrote, and arranged that young Bridgett should do the same. He started without delay, and went by train to Worcester, and thence by coach to Hanley, in August of that same year. During his Retreat he felt convinced that he ought to be a Religious, but did not decide in what Order or Congregation. He was not drawn to the Oratorians, for in those first days of his conversion he felt it was unwise to

join a body which appeared to him to be composed almost entirely of converts. Again he tells us that he had got the impression that in their preaching they were "straining to be ultra-Catholic." He says: "I wished to be thoroughly Catholic, but among those to whom it came easily and harmoniously." Again he tells us that he did not feel drawn to the old monastic orders. He adds: "An uncle of mine had prophesied that I should one day be a Jesuit (long before I was a Catholic); so I determined to disappoint him."

At this time he came across a Life of St Alphonsus, written by the Right Rev. J. T. Mullock, D.D., Bishop of St John's, Newfoundland. He was greatly moved by it to embrace a poor and missionary life. He also read the "Lives of the Companions of St Alphonsus," in the Oratorian Series. He then went to Clapham, and saw Father de Buggenoms. It was arranged that he should begin his noviciate at St Trond in Belgium, and should soon return to England to continue it; for the Redemptorists intended at that time to purchase the Oratorian House, St Wilfrid's, not far from Cheadle, in order to form an English noviciate. "So I left England," he says, "together with Father Plunkett, then a young officer, and we reached St Trond on the evening of September 29, 1850." Thus we see that he entered the noviciate only a little more than three months after his reception into the Church.

The day after their arrival in St Trond they went to Liège, where they saw Father Heilig, the Provincial, and were examined by Father Vandelaer.

On their return to St Trond they found more than a dozen postulants already in retreat, and they joined them, and received the habit on the feast of St Teresa, one of the special patrons of the Congregation, October 15, 1850.¹

The plan of purchasing St Wilfrid's came to nothing, and instead of returning soon to England Father Bridgett did not return for six years. He completed his noviciate at St Trond, and was professed on October 15, 1851. Immediately after his profession he went to the house of studies at Wittem in Holland. Here he remained for five years, studying Philosophy and Theology, History, Scripture and Canon Law, with the kindred subjects which make up the course of preparation for the priesthood.

Wittem was a very important centre in those days. There were students from almost every country in Europe. Father Bridgett was very much impressed by the charity which united this large number of young men, so different in character and antecedents, as well as nationality, and made them one family. Few but those who have experienced it can understand the sincerity, depth, and delicacy of the fraternal charity which exists in Religious Communities. He was also much struck with the great fervour in which they lived. He often spoke of the contrast between Wittem and the colleges he had frequented before his conversion.

He was an excellent student in all subjects, but

¹ Father Furniss, afterwards so well known for his missions to children, and Father Bradshaw belonged to the same noviciate.

excelled especially in Holy Scripture. His whole life showed how deeply he drank, during his stay at Wittem, of the spirit of St Alphonsus. It was a great joy to him to revisit this House, which he did more than once.

He was ordained subdeacon by the Bishop of Roermond at the episcopal Seminary in March 1856, and deacon by the same prelate at Wittem in the following June. He was ordained priest on August 4 of the same year, by Monsignor Laurent (Vicar Apostolic of Luxembourg), at Liège.

Immediately after his Ordination he returned to England, and reached Clapham on August 25, 1856, remaining there till 1862.

The following sketch of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, to which Father Bridgett devoted himself with such affectionate zeal, and in which he spent nearly fifty years, is for the most part from his own pen :—

The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, the members of which are commonly known as Redemptorists, and in some countries as Liguorians, was founded by St Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori, in the year 1732. Born of a noble Neapolitan family in 1696, Alphonsus, after giving promise of a brilliant career at the Bar, abandoned its honours at the age of twenty-seven to embrace the ecclesiastical state. His first desire was to join the Congregation of the Oratory. Being unable to do this, on account of the opposition of his father, he devoted himself to evangelising the poor in the city of Naples, and to the duties of preacher and confessor, residing first in his father's house, and

afterwards in the college of the Chinese, founded by Father Matthew Ripa, the famous Chinese missionary. He also joined a Secular Congregation of missionaries called the Propaganda, and with them gave several Missions in the provinces. By this means he came to know the spiritual destitution of the poor peasants and shepherds, and felt a strong desire to devote his life to the succour of the rural populations. He was confirmed in these thoughts especially by the advice of Monsignor Falcoia, Bishop of Castellamare. This prelate had long desired the establishment of an institute of Apostolic men, who should strive in all things to copy the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and after His example to evangelise the poor. He had founded at Scala a Community of ladies, called Nuns of the Most Holy Saviour, who prayed continually for the same intention. It was whilst giving the Spiritual Exercises to these nuns that St Alphonsus at last resolved, under the direction of Bishop Falcoia, to gather some companions, who should on the one hand seek their own perfection by the obligations and rules of a Religious life, and on the other devote themselves to apostolic work among the most neglected and forsaken souls. The work was solemnly begun at Scala on November 9, 1732, St Alphonsus being then thirty-six years old.

In carrying out this design the Saint encountered innumerable obstacles. The times were indeed most unfavourable to such a project, and it is one of the miracles of his life to have founded and maintained a new Religious Congregation at the time when the Marquis Tanucci was all-powerful in Naples. In spite, however, of those obstacles St Alphonsus succeeded in founding several houses in different parts of Naples and Sicily, and before his death saw his Institute spreading in the Papal States, and already transported beyond the Alps.

On February 25, 1749, Pope Benedict XIV. approved the Rule, and confirmed the new Institute by a solemn approbation. St Alphonsus had called his Congregation by the name of the Most Holy Saviour; but, to prevent confusion with the Canons Regular of that name in Venice, the Pope himself changed the title to that of the Most Holy Redeemer.

The members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, besides the three simple but perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, bind themselves by a vow of perseverance until death in the Institute, which they confirm by a promissory oath. They are bound by their vow of poverty to refuse all benefices, offices, or dignities outside their Congregation. Whenever a Redemptorist has been raised to a Bishopric, it has been by command of the Sovereign Pontiff, and by his dispensation. It was in this way that St Alphonsus himself was obliged to accept the Bishopric of St Agatha of the Goths. In order also more effectually to pursue the principal end of the Institute, which is to succour the most ignorant and neglected souls, St Alphonsus forbade his Fathers to undertake such works as the instruction of youth, or the government of Seminaries.

Their main occupation in the apostolic ministry is the preaching of Missions and Retreats to all classes of persons, but with a preference for such as are most neglected, especially those who live in remote villages and hamlets. As, however, in many countries the most neglected souls are to be found in the great cities, the intention of the founder is carried out in labouring for them. It is on record that St Alphonsus, about the time of the establishment of his Congregation, seriously debated the question of going himself to the savage heathen in South Africa, and that he welcomed an invitation

that had been made to him to send out missionaries for the conversion of the Nestorian heretics in Asia. It was also his wish that the members of his Congregation who should have reached the age of thirty should bind themselves by vow to give missions to the heathen, as soon as they should receive the command of the Sovereign Pontiff, or of the Superior-General. This vow was, however, considered superfluous by the Cardinals who examined the Rule for approbation. It need scarcely be said that a founder whose pre-eminent science has gained him a place among the twenty-three Doctors of the Church could not be indifferent to learning among his disciples. He insists, therefore, in his Rule on the duty of continual study, so that his priests "may be of use and profit to the Church on all occasions."

St Alphonsus died on August 1, 1787, in his ninety-first year. Before his death he foretold the spread of his Congregation beyond the Alps, and he rejoiced when he heard that two Germans had asked admission from the Superior of the Roman House. One of these, the Blessed Clement Maria Hofbauer, established the Order in Poland, Austria, and Switzerland, and since his death, in 1820, it has spread through most of the countries of Europe, in North and South America, the West Indies, and Australia. It was introduced into England by Dr Baines, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District, in 1843, shortly before his death, and into Ireland ten years later. There is one house in Scotland—St Mary's, Kinnoull, Perth—which forms part of the English Province. There are seven Houses in England—namely, the Provincial House at Clapham, South London; a House at Bishop Eton, Liverpool; at Monkwearmouth, Sunderland; at Bishop's Stortford, Herts; at Kingswood, Bristol; a new foundation at Edmonton, North London, in

the Archdiocese of Westminster, and also one at Norden, near Rochdale, Lancashire, in the diocese of Salford. The Houses in Ireland are at Limerick, Dundalk, Belfast, and at Esker, near Athenry. Australia and New Zealand form for the present a Vice-Province dependent on the Irish Province.

In the many revolutions of the nineteenth century, the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer has experienced more than the usual share of persecution, having been expelled in turn from Poland, Austria, Bavaria, France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany. Into several of these countries the missionaries have returned a second time, and renewed their labours.

The Congregation is under the government of a Superior-General, called the Rector Major, who is elected for life by a General Chapter, and is assisted by six Consultors. His residence is in Rome. The Superiors of the various Provinces (Provincials) and of the Houses (Rectors), with their Consultors, are appointed for a term of three years by the Rector Major. Their term of office may be renewed at his discretion. The Nuns already mentioned, commonly called Redemptoristines, form the *Order* of the Most Holy Redeemer, as distinguished from the Congregation of Missionaries. They are under the jurisdiction of the bishops in whose dioceses they reside. They are strictly enclosed and contemplative, assisting the missionaries by their prayers. They have monasteries in several parts of Europe. There is one at Clonliffe, Dublin, and one in London—namely, the Convent of St Alphonsus, Clarence Road, Clapham Park, S.W.

CHAPTER V

APOSTOLIC LABOUR

FROM what has been said it will be seen how busy a life the Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer may be called upon to lead—at least, as far as health and strength will permit. The idea of St Alphonsus was, broadly speaking, that half the year should be spent in Apostolic labour, and half in the strict observance of the Rule in the retirement of the monastery. In reference to this the Saint says that a true Redemptorist is to be an Apostle abroad but a Carthusian at home. By this, however, it must not be imagined that the Apostolic spirit is to be laid aside when he is living in the monastery, any more than the life of prayer is to be abandoned when he is out on mission. St Alphonsus desired all his Houses to be centres of Apostolic zeal. He wished the Houses to be founded within reach of those who stood in special need of help, and insisted that a sufficient number of Fathers should, as far as possible, be ever ready to labour for these souls, both in the pulpit and in the confessional. He ever desired that the interior life of prayer and mortification should take precedence of exterior work, because if the interior spirit is preserved zeal for souls will be secured, whereas if the interior

spirit deteriorates everything will go with it. Sometimes a Father will be out more than half the year, and St Alphonsus speaks of Fathers being engaged for even nine months. With the great stress of work, and the fewness of labourers in the English Province, a Father in full work might easily give seven or eight Missions, and a certain number of Retreats, in the course of the year. Seeing that Father Bridgett was nearly fifty years a Redemptorist, and had from thirty to forty years of active service, it might have been expected that the number of his Missions would have been very great. Several causes, as he himself tells us, concurred in preventing this. His words are as follows :—“ For several reasons I have not taken a great part in Missions :
1. Four residences (fifteen years) in Clapham, which is not so active in Missions as the other Houses.
2. Having been twelve years Rector. 3. Having been more occupied in Retreats. 4. Being of late years so stout that I was unfit for much work in the Confessional.” This was written about 1887.

In spite of all this he gave some eighty Missions in England and Ireland, and over 150 Retreats of various kinds. Of these Retreats as many as sixty-six were to priests, and about twenty-six to clerical students. Throughout the whole of his long life as a Redemptorist he was never a member of the Community in the one Scottish House, St Mary's, Kinnoull, Perth. Hence his work in Scotland was reduced to a minimum, and consisted almost entirely of Retreats, chiefly to the clergy, which are, for the most part, held in

the House at Kinnoull. One Clergy Retreat was unique. It was to the Priests in the Western Islands, and was held in South Uist. The clergy assembled from the neighbouring islands to the number of five, one of whom, at the beginning of the Retreat, was summoned away for an urgent sick call. A sheep had to be killed for their support, but a large dog, belonging to the priest who was acting as their host, managed during the night to find out where it was hanging, and to possess himself of a considerable share. Father Bridgett thoroughly enjoyed the wild scenery, and the rest and quiet. He gave a Retreat at Fort Augustus to the Monks, and Retreats at Blairs Seminary, close to Aberdeen. The only work in Scotland which he places under the head of Missions is a week of instructions and sermons to the people who live round Blairs College. He gave this after he had finished a Retreat to the students at the end of 1894.

Towards the end of his life, when unable to take part in active work, his zeal for souls showed itself in his great desire to foster vocations to the priesthood. He longed to inspire others with this zeal, both priests and laity. He wished to see an Association of priests established for this purpose, and, at the request of the Cardinal Archbishop and some of the Bishops, he drew up an appeal to the Bishops on this subject, to be put before them at their annual meeting in Low Week. His little pamphlet, "Reapers for the Harvest," was written for the same object.

As already mentioned, Father Bridgett reached



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Clapham August 26, 1856. Father Coffin (afterwards Bishop of Southwark) was his Rector, and showed the high estimation in which he held him by appointing him Minister in the September of the following year, when Father Bridgett was only twenty-eight years of age, and only one year ordained. It is necessary to explain for the benefit of those who do not know our customs that by our Rule each Rector chooses one of the Fathers of his Community to be the Minister, whose duty it is not only to keep the accounts and look after the temporalities of the Community, but to take precedence of the rest of the Community, and represent the Rector on all occasions when he is absent. Eighteen months later a still higher mark of esteem and confidence was shown to him, when he was appointed by the Father-General to be Consultor and Admonitor of the Vice-Provincial, Father Coffin, and Admonitor of the Rector of Clapham.

Father Bridgett retained these various offices till 1862. In that year his former fellow-novice, Father Plunkett, was appointed Rector of Limerick, and the Provincial seems to have chosen Father Bridgett as his Consultor in order to give him the best help he could.

Father Bridgett reached Limerick May 13, 1862, and remained there for nine years. At the end of the three years he succeeded Father Plunkett as Rector, and when his own term of three years was finished he was reappointed, and was thus for six years continuously Rector of Limerick. It was on

the occasion of his being appointed Rector of Limerick that he wrote the following letter to Father Douglas, then one of the Consultors-General in Rome :—

In the first place, many thanks for your kind wishes. On that evening, near fifteen years ago, when you accompanied Father Plunkett and myself to the London Bridge Station, on our way to start for the noviciate, I little thought that I should be succeeding my travelling companion as Rector of one of our Houses, and still less that I should be writing to you about it, having just returned from giving a Retreat to Irish priests.

I returned on Monday, as I say, from giving a Retreat to the Clergy of Kilmacduagh, and Kilfenora (in Co. Clare); and though they are the hottest of patriots on that west coast they listened to a Saxon with humility, I had almost said, the docility of children.

These years in Limerick were some of the most active of his life as a Missioner, especially during the three years he was under Father Plunkett. During that time Father Bridgett gave Missions in some twenty different places.

To those who have never seen a Mission it will be difficult to realise the amount of labour for both body and mind which even one Mission may involve. The evening sermon, which was an hour in duration, and into which the preacher has to throw all the energy of which he is capable, was a great effort of physical strength, as well as a considerable mental strain, repeated as it was day after day.

Again, the hours in the confessional are very long. Besides hearing confessions during the early Masses, the regular hours for this work were from ten to four in the afternoon without a break. In the towns confessions would be heard also after the evening service, up to ten or eleven. It was the long hours in the confessional which formed the chief trial to Father Bridgett in his missionary life. It is truly the life of a soldier. The writer well remembers Cardinal Manning, about the year 1863 (a year or two before he succeeded Cardinal Wiseman), giving a most enthusiastic account of the return of some of the Fathers from a Mission, which he witnessed at Bishop Eton, when he was there paying a visit to Father Coffin. He described it as a picked body of soldiers returning from an expedition in which they had had several sharp encounters with the enemy. They return to repair their losses, and make good the deficiencies of which the conflict may have rendered them specially conscious, and to improve and perfect the weapons they already possess.

With his exceptional abilities, and his readiness in preaching, Father Bridgett was soon perfectly provided with all the sermons, instructions, and conferences that could be needed for either Missions or Retreats. When he was appointed Rector of Limerick in succession to Father Plunkett, which post he held, as we have seen, for six years, he abstained from going on many Missions, knowing that the Rector's first duty is the spiritual care of his Community. Following the wise counsels of his

faithful friend and Superior, Father Coffin, he acted as though he had constantly before his eyes the words of St Paul to Timothy: "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 5). And those still more severe words: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8). He also began at that time to be frequently asked to give Clergy Retreats, to which the Provincial appointed him, hence we find that during these six years he did not give more than five or six Missions. There were other reasons, likewise, which demanded his presence at home. The house at Limerick had not been long founded, and our large church, only just completed, was as yet unprovided with permanent altars. During the six years Father Bridgett was Rector the house may be said to have been completed, by the building of St Patrick's Oratory, which is used not only by the Community, but also for the Clergy Retreats. In the church the fine high altar was put up, as well as three others, and the chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour was built. Considering the heavy debt which he found still weighing upon the house when he became Rector, these various works bear eloquent testimony to his activity and zeal.



MOUNT ST. ALPHONSUS, LINERICK

CHAPTER VI

CONFRATERNITY OF THE HOLY FAMILY

It was during the period spoken of above that the famous Confraternity of Men was founded. This work is unique, and is of such great importance that it deserves a chapter to itself.

In the year 1881 Father Bridgett returned as Rector to Limerick, and was presented with an address of welcome by the men of the Confraternity, in which he was styled its "illustrious founder." The address was read by Councillor Devitt (a friend and relation of Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator), one of the principal Catholics of Limerick, and a devoted member of the Confraternity. In his answer Father Bridgett, besides showing his characteristic modesty, gives us an account of the beginnings of the Confraternity.

Councillor Devitt, Gentlemen and dear Brethren in the Confraternity,—This is the first time in my life that I have received an address. But it is not for this reason only that I feel in an awkward position. I am welcomed back to Limerick, after ten years' absence, under the title of "illustrious founder" of a great work. Now, there was certainly nothing illustrious in the little share I had in originating that work, nor could I without presumption and injustice look upon myself as its founder. It was a wish that had been cherished by the Fathers of

this Community long before I ever set foot in Ireland that the Confraternity of the Holy Family might one day be established. It happened that when I held the office of Rector in 1867 several circumstances combined to make us feel that the time was come for the attempt. We put the work under the care of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, whose picture was placed in the church during a solemn triduo in the last three days of 1867, and then we opened, with some anxiety, a mission for men, in the first fortnight of 1868. Let me say, in passing, that three of the Fathers who took part in that mission have since passed into a better world—Father Lalor died in Limerick, Father John Connolly in Scotland, and Father Cameron in the West Indies. I hope their prayers are now offered for the Confraternity, which was the permanent result of their labours. Those of you who took part in the mission to men in 1868 will remember how the hearts of the men of Limerick were stirred; how the church was crowded night after night, and the confessionals thronged all the day long. We then attributed that extraordinary movement of divine grace to the prayers of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, and it is she who is really the illustrious founder of the Confraternity in Limerick.

But to speak of human agents, not only have all the Fathers who were then in this Community an equal right with myself to be called founders, but his Lordship the Bishop, who encouraged us in the work, and without whose sanction we could not have undertaken it, and the parochial clergy of the city, who rejoiced at the good which was being done to the souls of which they had charge, have all and each a share in that title. And I am glad to have this opportunity of saying publicly that if the Confraternity has thriven and increased in these fourteen years it is because there has never

been any jealousy or narrowness of mind on the part of any of the clergy of this city or neighbourhood, such as might easily have arisen in the hearts of less zealous and disinterested pastors, in seeing their sheep frequent other pasturages than their own.

With this little correction and addition, I cordially agree with all that the address says as to the history of the Confraternity and the zeal of those who have laboured for it.

It was but a child, three and a half years old, when I left Limerick, but it was a promising child, and its youth has not belied the promise. It is now a robust and sturdy youth. May it enjoy a vigorous manhood, and never experience the decay of old age !

To understand the magnitude and importance of the work which this Confraternity of the Holy Family did for the men of Limerick we must recall to mind the state of the country at the time. The Fenian organisation was spread on all sides, and was specially strong in County Limerick. The following letter from Father Bridgett to his old friend Father Douglas, who, as already mentioned, was one of the six Consultors-General, and Rector of our House of St Alfonso in Rome, will give a good idea of the difficulties they had to contend with :—

We had more than 1000 men at the opening (of the mission) last night, and this morning at the early instruction at half-past five o'clock about 500. This promises well. For a long time the men have been growing cold in the frequentation of the Sacraments. Most of them are either Fenians or sympathisers with Fenianism, and the opposition

the clergy have made to that movement has produced a dangerous estrangement between them and the people. You know, of course, that public opinion in England condemns as infamous crime, deserving no mercy, in the Fenians, what it applauds as heroic virtue in Italian revolutionists. Men are hung here as felons who are canonised as heroes and saints in Italy. Of course, this unfairness infuriates the people still more. I believe a Revolution will come here, and that all the bishops and priests cannot stop it. Some of the heads of Fenianism may be imbued with the principles of Continental infidels, but the vast majority look upon the movement as a holy war against the enemies of the Church.¹

This was written on January 2, 1868, at the beginning of the Men's Mission, which lasted three weeks. As the Mission went on the numbers increased to such an extent that it was computed that some 8000 men went to the Sacraments during it. The outcome of the Mission was the Confraternity of the Holy Family for Men, and about 1400 joined immediately. It went on steadily increasing in numbers, in spite of the decrease of the population through emigration. Twenty years later, in 1888, when the present writer took charge of it, it had reached over 5000. It might be imagined that with numbers so vast the influence of the Director over them was only nominal, but this was far from being the case.

¹ This letter has already appeared in print, in an interesting notice of Father Bridgett, published shortly after his death, by the Very Rev. Father Magnier in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*.

The organisation, which had gradually been established, had become so perfect that the Director was brought into immediate contact, not only with each of the 130 sections (which each had its Prefect and Sub-Prefect to preside over it), but with each member, as occasion required. It was about seven hours' work for the Director each Sunday to see the Prefects and Sub-Prefects whom he had summoned to give an account of their sections. He thus endeavoured to get through the whole number each month. These Sunday interviews with the Prefects resulted in messages of various kinds to those members who were not complying with the rules of the Confraternity.

Expulsion was but seldom resorted to, and was deservedly dreaded by the members, not out of a mere servile fear, but because they really loved and gloried in the Confraternity. God uses what means He wills; and there is no doubt that, while He made the Confraternity a channel of untold blessings in life, and above all in death, to the faithful members, He not unfrequently gave some visible token of His anger in the case of those unworthy subjects who had to be expelled. The secretaries of the Confraternity, six in number, used to keep careful accounts of some of the specially holy and beautiful deaths of the members; and most edifying reading they made. They would likewise chronicle some of the more striking instances of the sad fate of those who had been expelled.

Before the Silver Jubilee of the Confraternity was kept the number of the General Communion for the

Retreat amounted on one occasion to 5691. Large as is the church of St Alphonsus, it is obvious that such a number could never be accommodated in it at the same time. Indeed, from the early days of its existence it had been found more convenient to divide the Confraternity into two divisions, one of which met on Monday evening, and the other on Tuesday. They were thus known as the Monday and Tuesday Divisions. On each of these evenings the Sections were distributed throughout the large church, and some even within the altar-rails. As some places were better for hearing than others there was an ingenious system invented, whereby every week the Sections on each side of the church were continually moving one place. Thus all jealousy regarding position was avoided. As the Sections were arranged alphabetically, anyone who might have been absent for any time could easily find his Section. Moreover, there were always orderlies in attendance to show anyone who needed it his place.

It was, moreover, the object of the Director to keep the two divisions on an exact equality. He, therefore, gave exactly the same sermon or instruction to each. Sometimes strangers, ecclesiastical or lay, would come to see the Confraternity; for it was one of the special sights of the city, and its fame had spread throughout the land, and even to other countries. When brought, for example, on a Monday evening to the sacristy door, whence a view could be obtained across the aisles and nave right down to the door, and he saw the sea of heads, and the large church filled with men, and

was told that it was only an ordinary weekly meeting, and that it was only half the Confraternity ; that if he would come on the next day, Tuesday, he would see the same sight, and not one man the same ; he was filled with wonder and admiration. Often has the writer watched the men streaming into the church. They were of all classes—the employer often as well as the employed—and he would ask himself what it was that brought them ; for some came at considerable inconvenience, and some walked in from three and four miles in the country. Dr Butler, who was Bishop when it was founded, used to say it was the greatest miracle of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Often did it seem as though Our Holy Father Alphonsus (who is usually represented as an old man with a gentle, winning smile upon his saintly face) must have obtained from God a special influence over the people of Limerick, for what else could explain the extraordinary devotion which they manifested to the Director, no matter what his nationality or other qualities might be ? So long as he was one of the “ Holy Fathers ” (as they insisted on calling the Redemptorists) they became like children in his hands, though, as far as courage was concerned, they were ready, as Father Bridgett said, to rise in rebellion at a moment’s notice.

Every year a Retreat was given to the two divisions separately—a week for each. The eight o’clock Mass on the concluding Sunday of each Retreat was the time for the General Communion. The Bishop would say the Mass, and distribute

Communion at the altar-steps to those sections which were within the altar-rails in the large sanctuary and the side chapels. These would number fully 700 men. The remainder in the body of the church, about 1800, would come to the altar-rails to communicate, and four priests would be engaged in giving Communion there. Thus, with the Bishop, five would be giving Communion; and so perfect was the order that not one of the five would be kept waiting for a moment, but some 2500 men would receive Communion quietly and devoutly, without the least confusion. The Communion alone lasted just three-quarters of an hour. The Director would be in the pulpit during the Mass and the Communion and Thanksgiving, making the appropriate Acts, starting the hymns, or saying some decades of the Rosary.

Another special devotion of the Confraternity was the watching through the night during the Forty Hours' Adoration. The Director at the previous meeting would draw by lot the names of the Sections for each of the six hours of the night, from 11 P.M. to 5 A.M., during which women were excluded. The singing section always came from two o'clock to three, during which hour the Director, who conducted the devotions each hour throughout the night, would say Mass, at which the men would sing. The devotions for each hour were so arranged that the time never hung heavy on their hands. The men came in such numbers that the church at each hour would seem well filled, and there were more worshippers during the night than during

the day. The order of the devotions each hour (with the exception of from two to three, when it was slightly different, because of the Mass) was somewhat as follows. After giving time for the men to enter, the Director would start the Rosary, one side beginning and the other answering, so as to spare the Director, who had to go through the whole night. When it was finished there would be a few minutes' silent prayer. Then a hymn would be sung. After that the Director read the first half of what is called the Public Visit by St Alphonsus. After a few minutes' private prayer another hymn was sung. A few minutes' silent prayer was followed by the second half of the Public Visit. A third hymn was sung; and in a few minutes the signal that the hour was over would be given, often to the surprise of many. Some men would watch for more than one hour.

When the present Bishop, the Most Rev. Dr O'Dwyer, was consecrated, the Confraternity presented an address of congratulation. In his answer the Bishop, who had worked as a curate for several years in the city, bore his testimony to the work of the Confraternity in words so beautiful that we must not omit them:

My dear Brethren,—My good and holy predecessor, Dr Butler, once made a remark in reference to your Confraternity that so tersely and with so much truth expresses my views in regard to it that I can find nothing more appropriate as an answer to your beautiful, affectionate, and most welcome address. It was asked in his presence, on the occasion of one

of your General Communions, which it was such a delight to his pastoral heart to administer, if there had ever been wrought any miracle in connection with the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, which is kept in the Redemptorists'—in *your*—church. “Miracle?” answered the Bishop. “Oh yes; the Confraternity of the Holy Family is a standing miracle.” And considering its immense and ever-increasing numbers, reaching, as you say, the magnificent total of over 5000 practical members, being the largest religious association in any city of the whole Church; or the deep, firm, and all-pervading hold which it has taken of the entire population, especially the working classes of the city; or the intense religious vitality with which it is instinct, the ever-growing spirit of piety that animates it, the incalculable spiritual and temporal good it is daily producing—considering all these things, and remembering that they have shown not the least indication of decadence after so many years, I really do think that it may be regarded as so exceptional a work of God’s Providence, so manifestly maintained by Him, as to be justly called almost miraculous in its character. Even to those who view it only in its external aspect it is presenting scenes of religious fervour of weekly recurrence that fill all beholders with wonder and admiration. The crowds of working men, after their day’s toil, whether in the heat of summer or the inclemency of winter, streaming on Monday or Tuesday evenings to your great meetings, are now as fresh and surprising in their power to arrest the attention of the most careless observer, and to edify him, as in the earliest years of your institution. And your annual Retreats are like the concentration in one great event of all that is imposing during your year’s observances. But it is only one who has had the singular opportunities which I have

enjoyed—of personal observation as a priest in this city for many years—who can form even an approximate idea of the untold good that this Confraternity is doing for the sanctification of individual souls, or the influence, direct and indirect, which it exercises in elevating and strengthening the tone of religious feeling through the whole city. We, the priests of the city, know and feel it in the notable increase in the numbers frequenting the Sacraments, which we can immediately trace to the Confraternity. We have seen it in its most blessed and touching manifestations on the death-beds of hundreds of our people, around which it has brought the strength of a vivid faith and the consolations of Christian hope; and the ribbon and medal of your Confraternity, which we have seen worn by the dying working men, as a badge of the service of the God whom they were going to meet, has often given them and us reason to hope that we were assisting at the last touch, I may say, of God's grace to the life which He in His mercy had called to reward with a crown of love. I wish to say too, my dear brethren, how much I have always felt and admired the judicious and continuous education of the spiritual tastes and capabilities of our people that this Confraternity has been exercising; and as an illustration of it I do not think we need go farther than that wonderful procession to Mungret, with the scenes under the ruins of the old Abbey that made a picture that will live for ever in my memory, and, I think, in the memories of all that had the happiness to behold it. I had the great good fortune also to assist privately at your celebration of the Quarant' Ore, and I do not know that priest or bishop ever assisted at an exercise of piety on the part of his people more hopeful or consoling. It was in the night, when all the ordinary worshippers had retired to rest, that your members

came streaming in until they filled the great church, to keep watch with their God when He was alone, and to pray to Him, and worship Him in the adorable Sacrament. I was in retreat, preparing for consecration at the time, and I came out from the Redemptorists' Convent, and knelt amongst you, and I do not think that I ever was so moved. In the dead stillness of the night it was as if nothing stood between you and the manifest presence of God; and in your voices at that hour, whether you recited the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin or sang your lovely hymns of praise, there was a solemn tone; and at intervals even in your very silent presence, as you bowed down in adoration, there was a spirit that thrilled through one's being with a holy sympathy. As I knelt amongst you, my brethren, the unworthy priest who had been chosen for a high office, you, working men in your plain clothes, rough children of toil, after the fatigue of your day's labour, my heart went out to you, and I prayed the good God to make me worthy to be the Bishop of such a people. You wish, my brethren, to get an assurance of my sympathy and help in the future, such as my great and holy predecessor gave you. I cannot promise to do as much as he did for this or any other good work in the diocese, but if the profoundest reverence for the good you do, the warmest and best love for yourselves and your families, and the highest admiration for the great religious congregation of the Redemptorist Fathers by whom you are organised, can give effect to my desire to serve you, then, my dear brethren, it may be by God's blessing that I may not fall altogether short of my duty to so great a work. I thank God that it exists in my diocese, and I share the spirit of your pious exultation that the special blessing of God has in its great success given us the amazing privilege of having the largest religious Confrater-

nity possessed by any city in the world. Long may Limerick preserve that holy pre-eminence, and may she never forget to recognise the claim to gratitude and respect which the Redemptorist Fathers have made good by conferring it upon us by their ministry. In conclusion, allow me to thank you for your promises of love and obedience, which I know, however unworthy the occupant, you will render the office which I fill ; and for your prayers, which, I trust, may be heard at the Throne of Mercy on my behalf. I give in return, my dear brethren, my blessing to you and yours, and I hope that it may be the pledge and earnest of the blessing of God Himself.

These touching words of a Bishop so well known and so justly esteemed both in England and Ireland will bring home to every reader the importance of Father Bridgett's work in that first great Mission for Men, and in the foundation of the Confraternity, which was its result. It is not, perhaps, too much to say that it went far to save Ireland from that revolution which, as we have seen, Father Bridgett at first thought was inevitable. It counteracted the fatal influence of American Secret Societies, and cemented again that union between the people and their pastors which is the true glory of the Irish nation throughout the world.

It was remarked by many that the men, as they streamed up to the weekly meetings, walked like soldiers, as though they had been drilled. And so it was—they had been constantly and carefully drilled in preparation for the rising.

An amusing story is told of a Staff Officer who

in those critical days was making his tour of inspection, and came to Limerick just at the time of the Men's Mission in January 1868. He took up his quarters in the chief hotel; and his rooms looked out on George Street, the principal street in the city. He was awakened the next day before five o'clock on the dark winter's morning by the rush and tramp of innumerable feet of men evidently making for the same direction. The whole city seemed astir, and he felt sure it was the long-expected revolution. He leapt from his bed, and, calling to his servant, was greatly relieved when he discovered that it was only the men going up to the church of the Redemptorist Fathers for the five o'clock Mass and instruction.

It will be of interest to state that the Confraternity of the Holy Family was begun at Liège in the year 1844 by Henry Belletable, a non-commissioned officer of Engineers, especially for the sake of the men employed in a cannon foundry in that city. They were very few, and met in a private room in the house of a poor carpenter, one of their number. Father Dechamps, the Rector of the Redemptorist House in Liège, took up the work, and procured its erection into a Confraternity, and obtained leave for it to meet in the Redemptorist church. It has since been erected into an Archconfraternity.¹ Father Dechamps became Bishop

¹ The Archconfraternity of the Holy Family has always been under the direction of the Redemptorist Fathers—the moderator being one of the Redemptorist community in their house at Liège. It is not in any way affected by the late Papal decree erecting in every diocese throughout the world

of Namur in 1865, and some years later was made Archbishop of Malines and Primate of Belgium, and finally Cardinal. In his last years the part he had taken in the foundation of the Confraternity of the Holy Family was a great consolation to him. We may well believe that a like work, founded for the men of Limerick, will have pleaded before the throne of God for Father Bridgett when his last hour came.

special associations of the Holy Family, but it retains all the privileges conferred upon it when erected as an Archconfraternity.

CHAPTER VII

DIRECTION AND CORRESPONDENCE

FATHER BRIDGETT had a large correspondence with many different people, and on a large variety of subjects. He found time, for example, to guide and advise one lady from the time she was a girl at school up to the time of his death—a period of nearly thirty years. From his letters, which she preserved with affectionate reverence, the following selections are made from the number kindly placed at our disposal. More than once he tells us that letter-writing was a trial to him. Certainly no one would have suspected this who looked at his writing, which gives the impression that the words flowed from his pen without an effort. This disinclination, however, did not curtail his correspondence with this lady, who had recourse to him in many troubles and difficulties.

His ideas concerning direction, especially at a distance, can be learned from the following characteristic letter, written shortly before the marriage of the lady, who was the eldest of three sisters who had left school and were staying at home with their father, while some younger ones were still at a Convent school.¹ Father Bridgett was at the time

¹ The Notre Dame Convent, Clapham Common, of which Father Bridgett was for many years the spiritual director, and in which he ever took the deepest interest.

—Whit Monday, 1872—Rector of St Mary's, Clapham :—

My dear N.,—I had better be quite candid, and tell you the reason why I have not replied to your letter and those of your sisters. It is not mere neglect on my part. Neither is it that anything in them has displeased me—far from it. All the letters I have received have been beautiful ones. Why was it, then? The reason may appear to you, perhaps, somewhat selfish, but I will tell it.

It is known, I think, to your father and to the Sisters in the Convent that you have written to me, and I to you more than once. That, of course, is all right, and quite as it should be. But, furthermore, I have a suspicion (and some slight grounds at least for it) that from the fact of this little correspondence they imagine that I am directing you all from a distance, and that you only do this and that by my advice. Now, though I am quite sure that were this the case you would do me infinite credit, yet I am very shy about such responsibilities. Even were I still your Director, I should not like to be held accountable for your actions. I should neither like to be praised for what would be admired in your conduct, nor blamed for what would be found fault with, justly or unjustly.

It has always been my principle in direction to interfere as little as possible with my penitent's liberty; very seldom to suggest anything; never to oblige unless when I was sure the law of God obliged; never to forbid unless I was sure the law of God forbade; rarely to dissuade unless I saw that the conscience was already dissuading—in a word, simply to *follow* God's grace in my penitents, not to try to go before it or to take the place of it. My conviction has always been that the notion of *direction* is not that of impulsion. The Spirit of

God must give the impulse, the human Director only study it in the soul of his penitents, and counsel them how to obey it, help them to remove obstacles, try to discern between the movements of nature and those of grace, and solve doubts to the best of his power.

There is nothing singular in this view of the Director's office. As I have stated it, it would probably be admitted by almost every priest. But it is certain that it is not the view popularly taken of the office of Director. I know that people constantly quote the authority of their Director in defence of their conduct. "My Director told me to do this"; "My Director forbids me to do that"; "My Director allows this," and so on. Hence Directors are praised and blamed (generally the latter) *à tort et à travers*. Perhaps only half a case has been stated to them, and they have given the best decision they could, and they are blamed for their decision just as if they knew everything. Or they have done their best to restrain or urge on some self-willed penitent, and the conduct of that penitent is attributed to them just as if the soul had been quite docile in the Director's hand, a mere instrument, and had received all its impulsion from him.

Hence, whenever I have suspected that penitents of mine would quote my authority, I have always begged them not to do so, and have asked them simply to say they acted by their own judgment, which was true, seeing that I only tried to enlighten their judgment, not to override it. Now, my dear N., you will guess my meaning. I daresay the question has been sometimes asked you or your sisters: Does Father Bridgett know of this? Does Father Bridgett approve of that? I am sure there has been nothing but the best intention in those who may have put such a question, and I am sure you will have answered it prudently. Yet I do not like

such questions. Even if I were still your Director, I should resent them. But, on the strength of an occasional correspondence (three or at most four small notes in a year), to be thought to direct your whole lives and influence all your decisions is, of course, preposterous.

It has come to my knowledge, *e.g.*, that it is I who decide whether you go out into society or not, dance this or that dance, and so on! Hence when there came this very delicate matter about the offer, or supposed offer, of marriage, after once answering a certain question you put to me I thought it best to be entirely silent, so that should anything happen which might give annoyance to your father or others (I do not mean on your side) you might be able to say truly: Father Bridgett knows nothing whatever about the matter. He has not heard the gentleman's name. He has not written to me for months.

Here, then, is the whole explanation of my silence. I cannot bear the talk that goes on in families and in society about Directors and direction. Hence, you know, I have always shunned female penitents; for men, I think, never talk of their Directors, though they are generally far more earnest in asking advice, and docile in following it.

I see that I have written a very ungracious letter; yet I have no time to rewrite it, and must ask you to interpret charitably what sounds harshly. I am giving an eight days' Retreat in the Archbishop's Seminary.—Yours very faithfully,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

In 1874 this young lady married a good Catholic. She soon apparently broke down in health, and throughout her married life had many great trials and afflictions; hence most of Father Bridgett's letters are letters of encouragement. Being unable

to leave her room, she wrote to Father Bridgett, asking for a rule of life, and received the following answer :—

St Mary's, Kinnoull, Perth,
November 19, 1877.

Dear Mrs N.,—I have just been saying Mass for you, which (as I think I told you) I have been doing every Sunday for some time. I often think of you, shut up from Church and Sacraments. But as to the writing—what should I say? I could only tell you of my wanderings. I am something like a commercial traveller. Last month I was in Penzance, at the S.W. extremity of England. Now I am far away north in Scotland. Next week I shall be in Liverpool, and then again in the S.W. of England at Gloucester, and back again to the S.E. in Clapham (if God grants life and health to carry out my plans). This is a very different life from yours. But God has His Providence over each, and gives His grace according to His will. You ask me for a rule of life. It seems to me that you need none, except submission to the will of God, and, to get that, a little reading and plenty of ejaculatory prayers. If it does not tire you, you could hear Mass *in spirit* for a quarter of an hour, finishing by a spiritual Communion. I have no doubt you already say the rosary. Here are some intentions :

1st decade for increase of faith.

2nd " " hope.

3rd " " charity to God.

4th " " charity to neighbour.

5th " perseverance or for submission
to God's will.

Sometimes you might make it intercessory :

- 1st decade for Pope and Cardinals.
- 2nd ,, bishops and priests.
- 3rd ,, husband.
- 4th ,, mother, brothers, and sisters ;
- 5th ,, special intention — perhaps for
the little nameless one.

Or for the Holy Souls :

- 1st decade for the souls of your father and other
relations.
- 2nd ,, souls most near to heaven.
- 3rd ,, the soul most forsaken and
forgotten.
- 4th ,, those most devoted to Jesus
and Mary when on earth.
- 5th ,, those who had most compas-
sion themselves when on
earth for the Holy Souls.

Or again for the repression of intemperance :

- 1st decade for those beginning to drink.
- 2nd ,, habitual drunkards.
- 3rd ,, those in danger of death from
drink.
- 4th ,, those who had taken the pledge.
- 5th ,, those who labour against intem-
perance.

In due time a child was born, which the young mother seems to have called her “great achievement.” Father Bridgett, with his intensely nervous temperament, which made noise a positive torture to him, looked upon a screaming baby as the embodiment of ugliness and noise. As babies are either actually screaming, or liable to do so at a moment’s notice, he shrank from the race, and looked upon them as “necessary evils.” One re-

members a scene in the life of Johnson, who had a similar horror of babies. Boswell, who was a family man, insisted on catechising Johnson on what he would do if left alone in a house with a baby. At first Johnson very naturally objected to be so questioned, but at last good-naturedly submitted, and showed that even in Boswell's estimation he would have proved no bad nurse. So would it have been with Father Bridgett had he ever been placed in like circumstances. His mind would have been absorbed in some beautiful thought, and he would have forgotten all other inconveniences. In the following letter we see how his mind became fixed on the wonderful maternal instinct bestowed on every mother by God, which, in his spirit of self-condemnation he felt raised every mother, as such, indefinitely above a rough man, who, apart from higher considerations, would be prompted by mere instinct to get rid of a screaming baby at all costs. The letter shows also the perfect understanding there was between himself and his correspondent, who would, we are sure, have entrusted her "great achievement" to his care with the same confidence with which she entrusted her soul to his guidance:—

Mt. St Alphonsus, Limerick,
June 25, 1878.

Dear Mrs N.,—You see whence my letter is dated. I could not reply sooner, for I did not know my movements. I regret very much that this time we cannot meet. I should, indeed, have been glad to see yourself and *your great achievement*, though I do not think you would have been satisfied with

my admiration of the latter—for, to tell the truth, I do not like babies at all, and never could flatter mothers by pretending to do so. I think them necessary evils.

I once travelled for thirty miles with a young mother whose child was screaming itself black in the face all the time. The poor young woman as she was getting out of the carriage said very nicely : “I am afraid, sir, that baby has been very troublesome to you.” I replied : “No ; not at all, for I was thinking all the time of the wonderful providence of God in giving to mothers such love and patience ; for I must say that, had *I* had the care of the baby, I might have been tempted to throw it out of the carriage window !” I do not think she appreciated my compliment.

Now, dear Mrs N., there are two things you must not do. First, not invite me to spend a day at Kilkee, for I cannot leave here for an hour . . . secondly, you must not come to Limerick before Monday. No doubt this recommendation is needless, yet ladies are so impulsive and wilful that I thought it best to say a word.—Yours very faithfully,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

How intensely Father Bridgett appreciated the feelings of a young mother to her babe may be seen in his beautiful paper, “The Two Mothers,” which will be given later. Just as we all feel that no woman can be perfect unless she has some qualities of man—for not otherwise can she be the *mulier fortis* of Holy Scripture—so has it been most truly said that no man is perfect without some qualities of woman in his character ; and Father Bridgett stood the test.

This lady had the unspeakable sorrow of losing

more than one child as an infant. One child alone—the baby above alluded to—survived. The following letter of sympathy was written on one such occasion :—

St Nicholas', Pennywell Road, Bristol,
May 3, 1880.

Dear Mrs N.,—I profit by a not very busy day at the opening of a mission to pay some of my epistolary debts. I might, indeed, have answered you before, even in the busy days of Easter Confessions, but I know that you cared more to be remembered at the altar than for a few words of human sympathy.

I am delighted that your little one received baptism. I was reading the life of a holy lay-brother of the Jesuits—the Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez. He was married when young, and left by the death of his wife with a young baby. He was one day praying by its cradle when it slept, and meditating on the mysteries and uncertainties of human life. He naturally built a few castles in the air, and planned a brilliant future for his child. But, as he was a fervent Christian, the dreadful alternative came to him that, perhaps, the child might some day become wicked, and die in sin, and be lost, and he prayed God, in case He foresaw such a thing, to take the child away in its baptismal innocence; and his prayer was heard. You must ask your little angel to pray for her sister, and for you. And let me suggest this: tell her, with all a mother's authority, that she must take under her patronage in heaven, and save from the temptations of the world, N. N. In the catacombs of Rome are many inscriptions of parents, asking the prayers of their babies taken away in baptismal innocence.

I hope the fine spring has enabled Mr N. to get through well with the putting in of the crops, and

that better prospects are before you for this year than for last.—Believe me, dear Mrs N., yours most sincerely,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

A little trouble between his correspondent and her parish priest drew from Father Bridgett the expression of a wish that he could serve between her and the P. P. as a P. M.—peace-maker. Later he writes to her, if no longer as a Director, at least as a really candid friend :

Mt. St Alphonsus, Limerick,
December 16, 1881.

Dear Mrs N.,—I am going to give you a little lecture. You consult me as to whether you should ask from your lawful pastor a permission which it belongs to him as pastor to grant or refuse, and at the same time you warn me that if you do so it will be “in as stiff a letter as you can possibly pen,” and that you will not, and cannot, bring yourself to “cringe” to F. N. Did I not know you well, and know that you are really humble in spite of these big words, I should be really shocked, and I don’t think I should answer at all.

But I *do* know that this is all a bit of petulance, and does not express your real self. Now, I shall only ask you to make a little meditation, and I send you the points. You must draw your own conclusion.—Believe me, dear Mrs N., yours very faithfully,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

MEDITATION FOR XMAS

“To us a Child is given”

1st Point. God became man for the sake of man. He put Himself at men’s disposal, and let them do

what they liked with Him, not being indifferent to the treatment He received, yet not contradicting. He remained nine months a prisoner in Mary's womb to fulfil the law of *humanity*. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, because it was the *custom of the country*. He was laid in a manger, because the decree of the Emperor obliging Mary to travel, and the crowded inns at Bethlehem, prevented Him from having a more appropriate birthplace. He was circumcised, and presented in the Temple, in obedience to the Mosaic law. He fled into Egypt to escape the rage of a tyrant, etc.

2nd Point. Even now, in the Blessed Sacrament, He allows Himself to be treated as men choose to treat Him. He obeys the priesthood that He has Himself instituted, whether the consecration is performed by a saint or a sinner. He is lifted up, set down, placed on a throne for worship, or left forgotten in a tabernacle, according to the discretion or indifference of men. He is silent exteriorly whether received by a pure and loving soul or by a foul hypocrite.

3rd Point. By the common law of the Church no Mass is ever said outside a consecrated building, yet in certain countries she tolerates a less solemn celebration for the sake of the people. But she still leaves it to the discretion of her priests to carry out this law or to grant this dispensation, etc.

Conclusion. It is Xmas—I would wish Mass to be said in my house, and to receive Holy Communion. Shall I write as stiff a letter as I can pen, and take care not to cringe, and when refused grow very proud and angry, and vexed with myself for my condescension; or shall I write a respectful, gentle letter, ask Our Lord to inspire the priest as He thinks best, and keep my own heart sweet and peaceful whatever be the result?

The result of Father Bridgett's advice and of the following of it was that the misunderstanding was completely removed.

The following letter has a reference to Father Bridgett's mother, and shows the sincere esteem he had for his correspondent and her family :—

Mt. St Alphonsus, Limerick,
June 18, 1882.

Dear Mrs N.,—I have been delighted with your letters, and very grateful for them, because they brought such good news of yourself and everyone else.

Since I saw you I have given a Retreat to the Society of St Vincent, and I completed on Saturday a Retreat to the parish priests of the Limerick diocese, including your own lawful pastor! On Monday I begin again with the Curates. I shall be away giving Retreats during three weeks in July. As to leaving Ireland, I know no more than you do; but I think it more likely that a younger, thinner, and better man will be chosen Provincial, than that the burden will be laid on me.

I am glad you saw my dear old mother. It is a pity for her sake that your mother is not living in London. A gentle and imperceptible influence like hers and yours would be the only one that could touch my mother.—Believe me, dear Mrs N., yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

In another letter, dated June 11, 1883, he again refers to his mother, saying :

I did not know that my venerable mother could write such a nice letter. How firm is the writing for one seventy-eight years old! I can scarcely

believe that she is corresponding with my dear Limerick friends. It seems too strange.

In the September of 1883 he writes in his playful strain :

I have been really knocked up, or rather down, by the rain ; but, like the flowers, the sun is picking me up again. " Like the flowers ! Like the cabbages you mean," I think I hear you say. No, you didn't ; you have not malice enough. But most people would.

In her many and severe trials Father Bridgett continually reminds this lady that she must be very dear to Our Lord to have so large a share in His Cross :

So be brave and hopeful. Let us beg Our Lady of Perpetual Succour—unless we are mistaking altogether God's will—to bring a speedy recovery. But strive to keep yourself quite calm, for God's will is the best cradle for a child to sleep in.

Again :

St Mary's, Clapham,
October 10, 1886.

Dear Mrs N.,—I am going into my annual Retreat this evening. I know I ought to have written to you ; but what could I write except to assure you of my sympathy and prayers ?—and I hope you will believe you have them without my writing. No news is generally good news—but not in your case, I fear, or rather am sure, you have no consoling news to communicate as yet, or I should have been one of the first to hear it.

Bear up bravely—there will come a day when all this hidden mystery of suffering will be made clear.

Our Lord said : “ Not a sparrow *falls* without your Father’s care : and you are of more value than many sparrows.” He did not say the sparrows would *not* fall, or that His beloved apostles would not be *martyrs*, but that nothing could happen to them without the *loving* permission of a watchful and tender Father, who *could* prevent their suffering, but *would* not for most wise though hidden reasons. We must live by faith, hope, and love.—Yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

In the next letter, dated from St Joseph’s, Teignmouth, November 29, 1887, after apologising for not having answered her letters, and saying he has treated everyone in the same way, he adds :

I have had since my boyhood an almost invincible dislike to letter-writing. I had rather write ten sermons, or a whole book, than one letter. I don’t know the reason of this. It is a kind of madness. However, your two notes just received have made me write a little note to Dr Kane.¹ He has ever been to us a staunch friend and the best of benefactors. For more than thirty years he has given us his time, his labour, and skill even in dangerous sicknesses. We should be brutes indeed if we were not grateful or forget him in our prayers.

In a letter dated from the Catholic church, Romford, Essex, April 11, 1888, he says :

I am giving a wee Mission, and have more time than I had at home. Many thanks for your letter and good Easter wishes and prayers. I am glad to hear of Mary’s recovery. I hope she will not grow up too pretty, or, if she does, that she will

¹ Dr Kane was a well-known Limerick physician.

have good sense and humility to match. I daresay you have heard that for the last two or three years dropsy has been growing on me. I can still do a little work; but I do not expect a recovery, and it may easily become worse, and fatal. I have just published a book called "Life of Blessed John Fisher." . . . It is beautifully got up; "though I say it that shouldn't," it is interesting as well as pretty. I am sure you will like it.

The following letter, referring to his brother Gregson's death, is dated from St Mary's, Clapham, November 4, 1888 :—

Of course, I was not glad to hear of Mrs Kane's death, though I was very glad to hear it was so holy and peaceful. When you see Dr Kane please express to him my sympathy, and assure him of our prayers and Masses.

I wonder whether I told you that I lost my only surviving Catholic brother in the Spring? His death was very sudden at the last, but not unprepared. He had rarely, if ever, omitted his monthly Communion since his conversion in 1850; and the volume of St Alphonsus' "Preparation for Death" was found on his toilet-table. He was using it when he died. I was very ill at the time, and could neither go to his death nor burial. I am trying in a small way to prepare for my own death, which may also come suddenly before long; but I am pretty well just now, as I am able to start for our house in Devonshire to-morrow.

You must not be alarming yourself about Mary (or Bonnie, as I see you now call her). Children do not die because they are thin, and there is no consumption in either of her parents. Of course, it is an excellent practice to offer her to God; and *try* to dispose yourself to accept God's holy will, what-

ever it may be. Such offerings may seem unreal when we make them, but God does not despise them nor forget them if ever the time comes to exact a sacrifice.

Forgive my silence. I cannot write letters, but I never forget you and yours.—Yours most faithfully,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

In a letter of August 22, 1891, he gives a bit of advice to the lady's husband which many of us may, perhaps, feel that we at times deserve :

Tell Mr N. I wish I were nearer to him. I would take the liberty to give him a great slap on the shoulders, and say : "Get along, man ; cheer up, and trust in God's providence." I don't mean trust that all will be prosperous, for of that we have no promise, but that nothing will happen but by God's will, and all will work for the *real* happiness of those who trust in God.

The pulling down of the old Clapham house and the building of the new monastery afford him his never - omitted opportunity of drawing spiritual lessons from the commonest things :

St Mary's, Clapham,
July 5, 1892.

We are in an inconceivable state of confusion, surrounded by scaffolding, dust, and noise ; for we have pulled down part of one house,¹ and crowded ourselves into the other, and are repairing our tower, and building a new house, and adding to our church. We shall not be free for a couple of years, we fear. It will do to remind one of death, which St Paul calls pulling down the old house to build a new one.

¹ The old monastery consisted of two houses thrown together.

The next shows his thoughtful charity, lest his correspondent should be guilty of indiscretion to the injury of her health. It was written from St Joseph's, Teignmouth, March 12, 1894 :

This is the season when the birds sing ; and a little bird has flown over the sea, and been singing to me that you are indiscreet and not quite obedient to your doctor—or at least that you are likely not to obey him in Holy Week. Well, though I am far away, and have no jurisdiction to interfere, yet I know enough to say that you ought to eat meat every day (except, perhaps, Good Friday), and to find other ways of honouring our dear Lord's Passion.

The following is written to the child so often referred to in the letters to her mother :—

Dear Miss N.,—I have just received a letter from your Mama. She is very anxious to come to England to see your dear Grandmama before her death. I think it right she should do so ; but she must not travel alone. Will not Papa let you come with her ? I am sure you would not only take care of her, but greatly cheer her in this great trial. Tell Papa what I have just written, and tell him that I ask this favour of him, unless, indeed, he sees some great reason against it.

Tell Mama that our new appointments have come. Father Griffith replaces Father Vassall at Limerick. Father Vaughan is to be our Provincial ; and I am one of his Consultors, and my residence will be at Clapham. My new Rector is Father Stevens, whom your Mama will remember. He was several years at Limerick, Director of the Holy Family. The new Rector at Teignmouth is Father

Ryder, who was also several years at Limerick.—
Believe me, dear Miss N., yours most faithfully,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

The following referred to his health and the prospect of death. It recalls Cardinal Manning's expression: "Slowing into the station":—

St Mary's, Clapham,
Easter Tuesday, 1895.

Dear Mrs N.,—Thanks for your most kind inquiries. I am told that I had a serious illness some time ago. They called it acute bronchitis. I was kept in bed several days, and gave a deal of trouble to others. But I did not feel particularly ill. When it was all over, and I was up again, I felt much worse, and very weak. I am now as well as I am ever likely to be. I don't do much; but I preach now and then, and lately I gave a few days' Retreat in the Bishop's Seminary.

I am not troubled at the thought of death; for though I am not prepared for so great a thing as judgment, I am not likely to be better prepared by living longer. . . .—Yours very faithfully,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

The next letter was written during the long summer of 1895:

The heat has been very great; but ladies who dress in gossamer and use sunshades and fans may manage to live. Our sunshades are made of an old durable material called patience.

I suppose Miss N.—Bonnie that was—has left the schoolroom. She cannot be Bonnie any longer. You must find some higher name—Polly won't do, and May is too common. I don't think you will find anything better than Mary. It sounds pretty, and it has some good associations—has it not?

The mother had been getting her friends and relatives, several of whom were Religious, to pray for the success of a certain ball and for "Bonnie's" coming out. Father Bridgett could not resist using a little banter :

I fear St John's words: "Keep yourselves from idols," have still some application. If you do not make an idol of your Bonnie you go very near it. I suppose your last sacrifice to your idol, the ball, is now over. I suppose you wish her to be taken from you, but when the time comes you will cry out loud. Well, I hope you may be happy together this year at least.

Again, when speaking of the coming foundation of the Redemptoristines at Clapham, he adds :

It will, of course, be a great help to us if they pray for the success of all the Catholic balls and children's parties !

The next is in the same strain :

It used to be said by Protestants that the brigands in Italy pray to our Lady before attacking their victims. I never knew an instance of that ; but I suspect it must be true when Irish ladies make Novenas to our Lady for the success of balls and the "coming out" of those dangerous brigands their daughters. I am finding no fault ; but one lives and learns. I congratulate with you on your exploit.

The foundation of the new convent of the Redemptoristines in Clapham was the occasion of a sermon, and his correspondent wanted a copy :

The printers of my sermon have sent on your letter to me. They are not booksellers, only

printers. The sermon is not for sale at all, and is "priceless" as well as valueless. It was printed at the expense of Father Provincial, and the copies given to the nuns for distribution at their discretion.

The end of his life was fast approaching when he wrote :

St Mary's, Clapham,
October 4, 1898.

Dear Mrs N.,—I cannot leave your second letter quite without an answer. But I am writing from my bed. I have been very unwell for several weeks, and in much pain. I have had to undergo some operations. I have no symptoms of dying, but, of course, these are warnings to a man who is nearly seventy years old. I want your prayers for confidence and fortitude and the "fear of the Lord." Though I do not allude to the details of your letter, of course I note all you say with great interest.—Yours most sincerely, T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

His correspondent being then in Paris, Father Bridgett adds a postscript :

If you find your way to Notre Dame des Victoires please salute our Lady for me.

Only about a fortnight later he wrote :

I think I ought to tell you at once that I have received the Last Sacraments; and there is no chance of recovery. I expect a great deal of suffering, so I shall count on your prayers for the grace of patience and perseverance. I promise to pray for you.

The envelope enclosing the following letter of Father Bridgett's is endorsed by his spiritual daughter : "*My dear Father's last letter to me*" :—

St Mary's, Clapham,
November 27, 1898.

Dear Mrs N.,—This is the first time I have been able to write for many days. I have a few hours' comparative lull. I think I told you that I was anointed on October 14. My illness is interior cancer, etc. I have to endure a good deal of agony. But I now have learnt from experience what I knew before only in theory, that God's graces are much more copious for those who suffer for Him than for those who only work. This should be a great consolation to you, for God has made you one of His favourites, sending you so many trials and crosses. Mine are only bodily pains.

Father Gavin came to see me, and sat with me more than an hour a few days since. He was so kind and sympathetic. I think he goes to see your mother this week, and will, no doubt, write to you. I repeat that my illness is incurable, but its length quite uncertain. I may be released soon, or drag on for months. Kindest remembrances to Mr N. and to Bonnie.—Yours very faithfully in Christ,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.S.S.R.

Father Bridgett's love of truth made him grateful to those who pointed out to him any mistake into which he had fallen. A letter sent us by the Very Rev. Richard N. Billington of St Peter's, Lancaster, refers in the first place to a slip made in the First Edition of the "Life of Fisher" :

St Mary's, Clapham,
February 9, 1890.

Dear Father Billington,—You are quite right; and, of course, my dear friends, the Protestant critics, quickly detected the slip. The curious thing is that,

being often mixed about the Herods, I consulted Smith's Dictionary when writing, yet somehow wrote down the wrong name. The same happened in several cases ; and I have a list of fifty errata to correct, though most of them are misprints.

I have just printed a book called "Blunders and Forgeries." A favourable review in *The Manchester Guardian* asks what I can mean by saying : "Duncange gives us no instance of the use of such a word as 'capella' for 'caprea.'" The reviewer may well ask, for as the sentence stands I seem to be denying that capella (a kid) is a Latin word. What I meant, and should have written, was that, "however classical, it was not a likely word to have been used in the Middle Ages, and I found no instance of it in Duncange's Dictionary *Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis*."

You see it is a dangerous thing to meddle with authorship. I am obliged to you for your charity in rectifying my error.—Yours very sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

The following letters were addressed to the Rev. Father Matthew Russell, S.J. :—

Mount St Alphonsus, Limerick,
September 5, 1877.

Dear Father Russell,—On my arrival at Limerick for a few days' visit I found your envelope. Were it not the "silly season" for periodicals, during which there is a certain licence, I should have feared that *The Irish Monthly* was seriously on the decline when opening its pages to my little doggerel. However, I am sure Homer was only nodding—i.e. the Editor taking a holiday, or the usual contributors "gone to the Salt Water"—when the thought occurred of filling up a page with that Meditation. May you quickly recover from the *faux pas* !

You would scarcely believe how fat and lazy I

am getting. If a little free time remains after duties are performed it goes in reading rather than in writing. My last attempt at writing, "The Discipline of Drink," which, though small in bulk, cost me a good deal of research, was a failure. It has had a very limited sale, and has pleased no one, so I am not just now inclined to try again. *Laudatur et alget* seems to be the fate of Catholic literature just now—the *laudatur* being confined to the Catholic magazines and papers, which are always complimentary, and the *alget* to the Catholic public, who don't read at all, so far as I can learn. Are *you* not discouraged? You are continually providing varied and dainty fare; yet when I travel about, and recommend *The Monthly* (as I always do), I find no interest taken in the matter either by priests or laymen.

I expect to be in Dublin next week for a few hours. I have to preach at a profession at the monastery of St Alphonsus, Clonliffe West, on Thursday next. If you have never seen their beautiful chapel, do come to the ceremony or what follows it. I would offer to call in Stephen's Green in the afternoon; but I fear I shall not be free, and I must go over to England by the evening boat.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

8 Clapham Park Road, London, S.W.,
September 30, 1877.

Dear Father Russell,—Instead of what I proposed [the extract from Fisher] I send you a short paper, but without any certainty that it will suit your magazine. If it does, it might be the first of a series of four, or perhaps five. I find in my notebooks several capital blunders of *distinguished* Protestants, and, perhaps, a few of these might amuse and instruct your readers. I am sorry that

none of them regard Ireland, to make them a little more applicable to your pages. If you approve of the present instalment I think I may promise you to keep you supplied in good time for four months with papers about the same length. The blunders are the following:—one of Mr Thomas Wright, the Antiquarian, about St Aldhelm; one of Mr Kemble about Ven. Bede; one of Washington Irving and Lord Byron about the monks of Newstead; and one of Ranke and Isaac Taylor about your own Society. But the last has been shown up before, and I should do better, perhaps, to omit it.

I have others indeed, but they are of a nature scarcely suited to a popular magazine, and I am thinking of working two of them into a short article for *The Dublin*.

But let me come to an explicit understanding. You are *just as free* to reject these papers as any other editor who had not asked. I know well the perplexities an editor must often be in between courtesy to his contributors and his duties to the public or the interests of his own paper. I do not want you to be in any perplexity on my account. Tell me straight out, now or at any other time: "I like your paper, but it will scarcely suit me"; and to save you from mental reservation you may omit even the first part of the phrase.

I must also ask that you do *not* put my name to these papers. If you care to put the initials (T. E. B.) I have no great objection, though I even prefer that omitted.—Believe me, dear Father Russell, yours very sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

Mount St Alphonsus, Limerick,
May 10, 1882.

Dear Father Russell,—O'Connell's resolution never to fight after he had obtained all the good to be

hoped for from fighting is very racy. I never yet read his life, but if there is much more of that sort in it I think I shall, though not for spiritual reading. I am just now among Darwin's earth-worms. It may not quite suit our Lady's month; yet Dr Newman somewhere says in his quaint way that intrinsically it is not more strange that there should be a Blessed Virgin at the top of created things than worms at the bottom. I'm not sure he says worms—it may be cats—but that's the meaning.—Yours most sincerely, T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

Poor Father Coffin has made great struggles to get off his bishopric; but all his appeals have been rejected, and the matter is at length settled.

Mount St Alphonsus, Limerick,
October 20, 1882.

Dear Father Russell,—Just to give you a sign of life, I write to say that you made a mistake in the October number of *The Irish Monthly*, saying that Sir Ch. Bellew, S.J., was the only baronet priest. If you have the English directory you will find Sir John Bede Swale, Baronet, O.S.B., at Easingwold, in Yorkshire. I have seen Sir John Swale's pedigree (certified by Heralds' College) traced up to King Alfred (and, of course, it might have been continued to Woden).

But I want to know if you can explain another matter. I have always seen in books that the first Jesuits who came to England were Fathers Campion and Persons in 1580. But I now find in the just published "Records of the English Catholics" a letter of Cardinal Allen, written on August 10, 1577, to Father Chauncy, in which he is defending his own young priests from the seminary of Douai, and he alludes to one Jesuit at least who had been in England some years earlier. These are the words

(p. 33): "Consider the Jesuits' trade, who be men called of God to rayse the necessary discipline of the Church and be the best ghostly fathers that the Church hath. Among them, all bee not of lyke learning, nor of highest scholasticall skill, nor all gray heads, but some of them verie yonge, many well instructed in penitentiary cases and by a few yeres use quykly become very expert; one of which order being somewhat yonge but otherwyse exceedingly exercised was many days *some years past* in England where he did reconcile many and did much good; and yet because he was yonge *et quia mollibus vestiebatur* to cover his order my selfe hard yll spoken of him in England, as now ours be for the lyke things."

Can you throw any light on this? This new volume on Cardinal Allen is a book of great importance.—Yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

The next letter refers to an Anthology, "Lyra Hieratica," which, undeterred by the apathy of Catholics as readers, he was preparing for publication:

St Mary's, Clapham, London, S.W.,
October 10, 1895.

Dear Father Russell,—I am grateful for your letter. I have finished my collection—*i.e.* I have collected sufficient in quantity, and the collection will be fairly complete. Of course, there may be many good things I have not seen; and I might admit something more, even if I have to reject something that I have selected. My proposed title is "Lyra Hieratica; or, The High Priest and His Vicars."

It will consist of five parts. The first will refer to Our Lord in His priestly character; the second will treat of the dignity and functions of the Christian

priesthood ; the third is made up of miscellaneous historical sketches of priestly life ; the fourth is a long and really remarkable poem by one of our Fathers—reminiscences of his receiving the Last Sacraments ; the fifth part is made up of devotions—all in verse.

I have tried not to borrow much from other collections now in circulation—Harps, or Lyræ, or Carmina—but I found that not much has been written of Our Lord's High Priesthood, so that I was obliged in Part I. to use many of the dogmatic hymns from Roman and Parisian Breviaries, of which translations have been published. I have ventured to put in about a score of my own effusions where there was a gap to fill up, and I enclose two that I wrote yesterday. I had nothing about the Aaronic priesthood, so I have composed the (enclosed) "Wise Men at Jerusalem"¹ just as an introduction to the birth of the real High Priest.

I thank you very much for your generous encouragement and offers of help. When I have talked with Burns & Oates I will write again.—Yours most sincerely, T. E. Bridgett, C.S.S.R.

I don't send anything with a *wish* for publication ; you have too many real poets on your staff to need any of my rhyming.

As already mentioned, Father Bridgett's works made him widely known, and gained for him valued friendships with some of the best historical scholars of our day. Among them no one ranks higher than Mr James Gairdner, of whom Mr W. H. Hutton, in his preface to his recent "Life of More," says : "Every student of English history is under almost

¹ Called when published "The Recreant Sons of Levi." See "Lyræ Hieratica."

immeasurable obligation to the labours of Mr James Gairdner, whose authority on the period is beyond appeal." In 1888, when Father Bridgett sent Mr Gairdner his "Life of Fisher," he received the following answer:—

Accept my best thanks for your very interesting volume. It may be some time before I can do it full justice in perusal; but no one, even of your own communion, can feel greater sympathy with your desire to set forth a noble and saintly life in all its beauty — especially now, when so much is known that was unknown to Lewis.

In a letter over two years later Mr Gairdner writes again to Father Bridgett in praise of his "Blunders and Forgeries," and at the same time points out what he thinks is a mistake in the Appendix to the second edition of Father Bridgett's "Life of Fisher." Unfortunately, we have not got Father Bridgett's reply, but Mr Gairdner's second letter on this subject shows how much Father Bridgett had to say for his assertion. Mr Gairdner's first letter is dated December 16, 1890:

My dear Sir,—You have done such excellent service in unravelling some of the tangles of historical error, and exposing "Blunders and Forgeries" (a book I read with much amusement not long ago), that I believe you will be glad to be put right on one little matter yourself. I find in the Appendix to the second edition of your "Life of Fisher" you quote from Ellis a letter of John Friar to Cromwell, requesting payment for his attendance as physician on the late Bishop of Rochester. The letter is

dated August 16, and is addressed to Cromwell as Lord Privy Seal, which could only be at the earliest in 1536—not, as you say, nearly two months after the Cardinal's (F's) death, but a year and nearly two months after it. And it is quite conceivable that a physician who attended F. by royal command was left unpaid for such a period. But I think it is clear that the Bishop of Rochester whom Friar attended was Hilsey, who died on August 4, 1539 (see Wriothlesley's *Chronicle*, though Nicolas dates his death 1538); and the letter was written just twelve days later. The humour of the letter, which is really very innocent and amusing, would have been not only brutal if it referred to Fisher, but, moreover, would have been quite misapplied, as F. did not die under the doctor's hands.

At the same time let me thank you for your correction at p. 476 of a passage in one of Chapuys' letters incorrectly given by me, or rather by my predecessor, Mr Brewer, who was editor of the *Calendar* at that time.—Yours very truly,

JAMES GAIRDNER.

January 5, 1891.

My dear Sir,—Thank you much for your Appendix. I see you had really very plausible grounds to go upon for making Friar's letter refer to Fisher—especially as the mutilated name in the *Calendar* (Vol. VIII. No. 856) certainly does refer to a physician, and apparently to Friar ("Dr Fre . . .").

Nevertheless, I think, both from the manner of reference and the date, that the Bishop of Rochester referred to must be Hilsey.

I am much pleased to hear that you have got a life of Sir Thomas More on hand. A new life is certainly very much wanted of the most winning character of Henry VIII.'s time. Could you not induce someone also to undertake a new edition

of his English works? Much that he has written is only accessible in the British Museum or some great public library.—Yours very truly,

JAMES GAIRDNER.

Early in November 1898 Mr Gairdner, not knowing of Father Bridgett's illness, sent him a ticket with an invitation to hear his paper on the "Fall of Cardinal Wolsey," which he was to read to the Royal Historical Society. Father Bridgett could only reply :

St Mary's, Clapham, S.W.,
November 10, 1898.

Dear Mr Gairdner,—I am much obliged for the invitation to be present at your lecture. How I should have enjoyed it! But I am drawing near my death—a very painful one from cancer—and cannot leave my bed, or at least my room, though I may live to drag through my misery for many weeks.—I am, dear sir, yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT.

Yet another letter of Mr Gairdner's reached Father Bridgett on his death-bed. With that extraordinary industry which did not desert him even then, Father Bridgett had sent to *The Tablet* the following statement in proof of More's having died directly for denying the King's Supremacy :—

As sickness warns me that I cannot live to clear up, in a new edition of the "Life of Blessed T. More," an important question which might, if misunderstood, even affect his canonisation, I ask leave to place on record in your paper some remarks on two statements that have appeared since my second edition. As these remarks can only be

thoroughly appreciated and tested by careful study, I need not apologise for the references to my own book. They can be verified in either edition.

Mr Wilfrid Ward's words :

"On the other hand, Catholics have perhaps, at all events until recently, shown an inadequate appreciation of the peculiar state of things which made men like Sir Thomas More *for years uncertain* that to remain within the English Church after the breach with Rome was to part company with the Church Catholic" [*Nineteenth Century* (November 1895). "The Rigidity of Rome," p. 802].

Mr Hutton's words :

"He was placed suddenly in face of a critical question. He answered it as his successors in the English Church would not now answer. But it would be difficult to find in his writings any formal statement of doctrine which the English Church since his day has ever formally abandoned. It would be idle indeed to dispute with Roman Hagiologists their right to revere him as a martyr of their own, but no true theological estimate would deny that he belongs to the historic and continuous Church of England (p. 282). He laid down his life rather than surrender, for fear of death, what he again and again admitted to be but an opinion. He would lay no burden on the souls of other men and he would not speak against the new laws, the divorce, the King's marriage, the measures by which the Church was freed from foreign subjection. These were matters upon which his own views had changed, and upon which he could not feel that his judgment need be final or binding for other men. He condemned no man ; but he would not yield an inch himself. To him, almost alone among his

contemporaries, the conclusions of the intellect seemed no less sacred than the chastity of the body. He died rather than tarnish the whiteness of his soul" ("Life of Sir Thomas More," p. 277).

As I understand these two writers, they take different though not necessarily contradictory views. Mr Ward affirms that More was for years uncertain as to the necessity of communion with Rome; he contends, however, that More's case was anomalous and cannot fairly be made a precedent. Mr Hutton concedes that More died for the Roman Supremacy, but only as for a probable opinion, which he was too conscientious to reject. To me it seems that both these writers have mistaken the subject-matter of More's uncertainties and the state of his conscience. I must ask the reader to refer back to the pages indicated in my "Life of Blessed More" (first or second edition).

I. More once thought that Papal Supremacy was of ecclesiastical origin. Did it take him several years to correct this opinion after his attention was given to the matter? He nowhere says this; he says that he thus thought "until I read in that matter those things that the King's highness had written" (p. 343). After he read the King's book, and by all that he had read for ten years on the subject, he was so convinced that the Roman See had Supremacy by divine institution that his "conscience would be in right great peril if I should follow the other side, and deny the primacy to be provided of God" (p. 343-4). This he wrote in 1534. In his Latin book against Luther, written in 1523, he had declared his entire agreement with Fisher on this subject (see p. 219). He merely says that his ten years' subsequent studies had confirmed this conclusion. I have given my interpretation of More's early error at p. 346.

2. More was so far from thinking that it might be lawful to live in separation from the Roman See that he says this would be unlawful, whether the Supremacy were divine or merely ecclesiastical (p. 344). He professes no *uncertainty* on the matter.

3. Nor did he think, as Mr Hutton says, that the divine institution of the Papal Supremacy was within the limits of mere theological opinion, as to which men might take one side or the other, according to private convictions. Whatever a general council has decided must be held as undoubted, and private opinion must yield to it (pp. 344, 372). Now, on this subject he says general councils have spoken (pp. 219, 344).

4. He had collected much material on this subject, but had thought it best to suppress it at that time (p. 345). In this is the answer to Mr Hutton's remark about the absence of dogmatical propositions or "formal statements."

5. What, then, was the meaning of the phrase so often used by More, that he followed his own conscience, but did not blame others who followed theirs? I reply that he does not use this phrase regarding the Papal Supremacy. He uses it (*a*) of the Oath of Succession (pp. 353, 380) as proposed to him. Cranmer took up the word, and said that if More did not blame others he could not be very sure himself, and that, therefore, since the King was in possession, and More his subject, he was bound to obey in a doubt (p. 355). More at first was puzzled, but soon saw that the conclusion was too wide (p. 356). In fact, even a monastic superior could not have obliged his subject to swear that the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception" was false when he was convinced of its truth.

To the argument of the Abbot of Westminster, that he might yield to the authority of numbers, he replied that the authority was on his own side

(p. 356). He referred, of course, not to England, but to the Continent and to the principles laid down in the preamble of the Act of Succession.

Now, as to this oath, it must be remarked that he could have taken it if otherwise framed; that Fisher would have taken it in a form that More could not have accepted (p. 371); that More suggests several ways in which he supposes people might have taken it (p. 371) which he does not approve, but it was not for him to censure; also that he had, besides the reasons suggested by Cranmer (p. 358), other private reasons that he never had disclosed and never would disclose (pp. 375, 381-2); yet he was very strongly convinced. He was sure he could never change his mind (p. 380).

(b) Another question was the *King's Supremacy*. This question must not be confounded with that of the Pope's Supremacy, as if the one was the direct contradictory of the other. A man might deny the Pope's Supremacy yet not admit the King's, and he might admit the King's *in certain matters* and yet not deny the Pope's.

Yet More does not use the same language on this matter as on the Oath of Succession. He says he has a right to maintain silence (403), and would not even say until after his condemnation that his conscience went against the statute (406).

Cromwell made a subtle objection—viz. that More had himself used inquisitorial power, and had not allowed people to be silent regarding the Pope's Supremacy (407); why, then, might not the king demand an answer? More's answer is noteworthy. He says the Pope's Supremacy is a matter *belonging to the common faith of the Church*—the King's is only an affair of this realm (p. 407).

As regards the words about conscience (p. 408), it is clear that the members of the Council twitted

him with his unsure conscience ; but, as he had declared that he would not say how his conscience stood with regard to the King's Supremacy, they must have been speaking about the Oath of Succession. If, however, they spoke of the King's Supremacy his words must not be applied to Papal Supremacy. As to Rich's assertions, they are of no value (pp. 418-419).

At his trial he affirmed that he had never declared his conscience as to the King's Supremacy (p. 421), he had told Fisher to inform his conscience on the matter (p. 421), and had only put a hypothesis as regards his own conscience (p. 421).

After his sentence he declared that all doctors and councils were against Royal Supremacy (p. 422), and that he had studied this question for seven years (p. 422).

It should be clearly marked that already in 1534 he had studied Papal Supremacy for ten years (p. 343), and the question of Royal Supremacy for seven in 1535 (p. 422). These two sayings have been constantly confused, yet they are utterly distinct. He had been aroused to the matter of the Papal Supremacy by Henry's book in 1522, and to the Royal Supremacy by the divorce proceedings of 1528.

6. For what, then, did More die ? Directly, he died for rejecting the King's Supremacy. This is the only matter objected in the indictment, where there is not a word about the Pope. Yet, *indirectly*, he died for the Supremacy of the Holy See (pp. 422-424).

I see, then, no grounds whatever for Mr Ward's statement ; and Mr Hutton appears to me to have applied to Papal Supremacy what More said only of the Oath of Succession. More did not hold the Papal Supremacy as a merely probable theological conclusion, but as a matter of defined faith.

Of this statement he sent a copy to Mr Gairdner, and received the following reply :—

West View, Pinner, Middlesex,
November 23, 1898.

Dear Father Bridgett,—You are quite welcome to keep the proof of my paper on Wolsey's fall; and I hope I may do the same with your *Tablet*, in which I have read your letter about More with great interest. Such papers are of special value, and I think it is a pity they are not studied among us Protestants as they should be. I really agree with you very much; indeed, I might almost say completely, especially in your conclusion. More died "directly" for rejecting the King's Supremacy: that was why he was condemned.

Indirectly, as you say, he suffered for faith in the Supremacy of the Holy See. But if we take cognisance of a cause for which he "indirectly" suffered he also died to uphold the sanctity of marriage, of which at that time there seemed apparently no other guarantee than papal jurisdiction. Nor did he and others die in vain who protested against moral laws being twisted and turned upside down by royal authority to satisfy lust and self-will.—Yours very sincerely, JAMES GAIRDNER.

The same letter to *The Tablet* brought the following letter from Father J. H. Pollen, S.J., who has devoted himself to kindred subjects. He was at the time staying in Rome :—

Collegio P. L. Americano, Rome,
November 28, 1898.

Dear Father Bridgett,—I was very much touched by receiving a letter from Father Gavin yesterday, enclosing your letter on Blessed Thomas More,

and giving a very bad account of your health. I hope that account overdraws the gravity of the situation, and that Our Lord will send you more days yet to use your pen for His service. Your letter to *The Tablet* is the sort of letter to give you comfort even if it were to be your last. But I am sure that there is more of the same good work to come yet from the source whence so much has already flowed.

With regard to the substance of your letter, it seems to me most satisfactory. The objections raised are the sort of objections which were bound sooner or later to be raised by careless or uninstructed writers, and your answer will serve for the future as well as for the past. After all, the *facts* of the case are so clear. Who can imagine a clear-minded man like Blessed Thomas—a man far too lawyer-like to court his fate—laying down his life for an uncertainty? I have found in the Archives here nothing concerning More except a letter from the humanist Cochläus to him. I am going to edit it soon for the *Römische Quartal Schrift*, and shall have much pleasure in sending you a copy. It throws no new light on More's life, though it adds a new testimony to his kindness, interest in literature, etc.

With my studies on the Popes and Queen Elizabeth I am more than satisfied, and if I only had literary skill sufficient I should not despair of bringing round sympathy entirely to the Catholic side. But I shall be content if I can make the facts clear: the results will look out for themselves. Assuring you of my prayers, and begging a place in yours.—Yours ever very truly,

J. H. POLLEN, S.J.

Father Bridgett disliked keeping letters without good reason, and hence out of the number he must

have received from Cardinal Manning we have only one :

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W.,
April 21, 1888.

My dear Father Bridgett,—Last night I received your "Life of B. John Fisher," and this morning your letter. For both I thank you very sincerely. I shall read the book with great interest. This beatification makes an epoch in the Church of England. And I hope we may rise to it. I do not know, and I have many fears. I see a Christian world and a Catholic world, but they are the world after all. And I have much to say, and much of which I wish I could be sure.

When you come back to Clapham let me know, and I will come. For the last two years I have been feeling the weight of age, and have hardly left home for a day, and for weeks have hardly left the house. But, thank God, I am well. This accounts for my so seldom going anywhere—Clapham included. Many thanks for your kind work at Romford.¹—Believe me, always yours affectionately
 in J. C., HENRY E., C. Archbishop.

A blessing to you all and to Father Tilley.

The Rev. Father Hanson, S.J., who has kindly put the following correspondence at our disposal, thus describes how he became acquainted with Father Bridgett, and the impression made upon him : " I made the Father's acquaintance in 1886, soon after I had been received into the Church at Manresa House. As my home was on Clapham Common, Father Clarke advised me to call on

¹ A fortnight's mission at Romford.

Father Bridgett, and wrote for me a note of introduction, which Father Bridgett protested was 'totally unnecessary between two Clapham men.' (Clapham was the home of his childhood). He was one of the best talkers I have known, for he was the readiest of listeners; and though his mind was stored with most varied learning he never 'lectured' or made a show of his knowledge. We used to have long talks on Saturday afternoons in your library at Clapham, winding up with my confession. And he often let me accompany him to the National Gallery, Kew Gardens, and similar places when he could find time to take a little outing. I have often wondered since how the good Father endured my naive questions and comments, for a recent convert is apt to be not the most welcome of companions. However, we had not a few subjects in common. I found him always genial, equally ready with remarks of the most striking piety and with a humorous story. He seemed to have a sunny disposition, always viewing things on their bright side, or if they had none, at least he let nothing depress him. Whatever was said to him at once engrossed him, just as if he had nothing else to think about. And that is wonderful and rare. He was never a distracted or condescending listener. Early in my friendship with him he insisted on my studying the *Post-Reformation* history of English Catholicism. 'For,' he said, 'you will never understand our present little troubles until you appreciate the *storms within* which have been raging in the past—and no very remote past either.' Accordingly

he lent me Canon Flanagan's 'History of the Church of England,' which I returned saying that it seemed to me that the Catholics of England had suffered almost as badly at their own hands, or at the hands of false friends, as they had at the hands of their worst foes. And he agreed, but added that the cause lay rather in circumstances, as a rule, than in the faults of individuals. There was nothing in Father Bridgett of that mischievous idealising temper which is so destructive of frankness in the historian. His faith was intensely vivid. He disliked with aversion anything which breathed a spirit of want of faith or want of hope. It was just this lively faith which made him so calm and so frank about many things which smaller men try to deny or explain away."

At the end of 1887 Mr Hanson gave Father Bridgett a reprint of the Sarum Breviary, published in three volumes by the Cambridge University Press. This kind present drew the following letter of acknowledgment :—

St Mary's, Clapham,
December 31, 1903.

Dear Mr Hanson,—I don't know whether your kind letter and present caused me more pleasure or surprise. You speak of gratitude and indebtedness; but I have never had an opportunity of rendering you a service—at least not one that cost me anything; for I cannot say none, since I think I brought you Holy Communion in your sickness.

However, not to discuss this, your really splendid offering to our library will give pleasure and instruction not to me only, but to many more. I

once had a Sarum Breviary, and looked well through it ; but no one here but myself has ever seen one, and I promise myself a great treat in examining the book that Blessed John Fisher used, and comparing it with what we use now. I am delighted to find that the prefaces, etc., are not controversial or Anglican ; in fact, it seems just the book it should be. You are making a great sacrifice in depriving yourself of such a book.

Wishing that the coming year may be full of grace to you, especially of that which you most desire, I remain, yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

In due time Mr Hanson joined the Society of Jesus ; and at the time of Father Bridgett's last illness he was a student at St Beuno's College, preparing for Ordination, when the following letters were written :—

St Beuno's College,

January 30, 1899.

My dear Father Bridgett,—The reports of your dangerous sickness which have reached me from time to time have grieved me more than I can tell you. Father Castle's letter asking us to join in the prayers for your recovery was placed on the notice-board outside our domestic chapel, and left there during the novena.

I assure you that the thought of you has been daily present to me since then. O that God would grant your restoration to us, for we can ill spare you ! O that the English Martyrs, especially Blessed Thomas More and the Blessed John Fisher, with whose names your name will always be linked, would obtain for you the boon we are praying for ! You have been instrumental in winning multitudes to know and love them ; what now

remains but that you should be the instrument for their glorious canonisation ?

If God does not grant this I shall think that you did not wish it. And then it will be hard for me not to reproach you ! Yet I do not forget what sufferings you are going through. I pray earnestly that God may be pleased to ease the pains of your body, to give you quiet sleep, and abundance of holy and consoling thoughts amid your prolonged suffering and weariness.

I wonder whether Blessed Thomas More would have gone through a sickness such as yours with the same serenity and holy merriment with which he suffered imprisonment and execution. I almost think it would have been more difficult. He would have seen more of "Meg," it is true, but Mistress More would have been terrible in a sick man's room.

My dear Father, you were most kind to me in former years, in the beginning of my life as a Catholic—a time when your friendship was peculiarly helpful to me. And now, if after all our good Lord should call you to Himself, *do not forget me*. I am not yet a priest. I am looking forward to Ordination next September, if all goes well. But I am most unworthy of this dignity : you can help me by your prayers.—Believe me, my dear Father Bridgett, with affectionate remembrances, yours most respectfully,

ERIC D. HANSON, S.J.

P.S.—If you should be able to send a message I should most of all value some little counsel, such as may be useful to me and at the same time characteristic of yourself.

The following letter was written in pencil by Father Bridgett with his own hand only seventeen days before his death :—

St Mary's, Clapham,
January 31, 1899.

Dear Father Hanson,—It was a great joy to me to receive your letter. Indeed, one of the principal consolations of my illness has been that it has elicited a multitude of kind, sweet letters, all founded on charity. I was anointed on October 14, 1898. Since then it has pleased God to send me much suffering. . . . I mention all this because I find it is a very great grace. I have been brought face to face with death. I have been forced to do penance. And God in His goodness has taught me experimentally many things which I only knew theoretically before about pain, about sin, about Our Lord's Passion. I have derived great help from Father Gallwey's "Watches," especially from the Agony in the Garden.

It is true that in a certain sense I dreaded my cure. I am seventy years old, and my life useless. Why should I be restored to health for a few months *to die again?* Still, I thought I might give some glory to the English Martyrs, and I joined in the Novena.

I am glad to hear of your Ordination, and will not forget you here or beyond the grave. I have printed two little books of verse: "Lyra Hieratica" and "Sonnets and Epigrams." Were I able to do so I would copy for you one of the Sonnets. However, I will have it copied by my nurse [the lay-brother], and sign it.

Please thank the Fathers for their great charity. I have a precious document containing most of their names. When I am gone it will be treasured as a monument of the fraternal charity of the S.J. I would say "God bless you all," but I prefer to say "Benedicite Patres Reverendi."—Yours most faithfully,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.S.S.R.

The following is Father Hanson's answer :—

St Beuno's College,
February 7, 1899.

My dear Father Bridgett,—Only the pressure of my work has prevented me from thanking you more promptly for your most beautiful and touching letter. It was wholly unexpected, and I fear that the physical effort involved in writing it must have been very great. It is a new proof of your kindness, and what you have written will always be to me a dear and lifelike memorial of yourself.

You are able to speak of your terrible sufferings as “a great grace”: even if you had written nothing more than that you would have said enough for me to have remembered you with gratitude all my life. It is this which helps us who have no sufferings—or but little. There are hidden victories which count more than any visible triumphs. The example of your faith and holy courage consoles and strengthens me more than would the news that you had brought into the Church half-a-dozen Anglican bishops.

I could not refrain from sending a copy of your letter to Father Gallwey; it has consoled him to know that his book has helped you. I also hung it up in our Recreation-room here, for all to read. That was the surest way to deliver your messages and obtain more prayers for you. Father Tepe—who has been professor of Dogma here for many years—on hearing that a letter had come from you, was very desirous to see it, and when this came to my ears I took him your letter, which he listened to with the tenderest interest.

We are all your friends here. Within even this last year two of your books have been read again in the Refectory—“Blunders and Forgeries” and your “Life of Blessed Thomas More.” And your

recent "Sonnets and Epigrams," almost from the day of their appearance, have been read by many of us: I was myself reproached for keeping the book too long. Thank you most sincerely for the charming sonnet which you had copied for me, and signed.

Father Tepe showed me a letter which he received not long ago from Bishop Knight, in which he mentioned a visit to you at Clapham, and spoke of your indomitable courage and brightness amidst most grievous sufferings. I still entreat Our Lord to restore you to health and to us. If this is not to be, or, indeed, equally well if it is granted, you will say:

O day and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from His embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss.

I cannot write what is in my heart to say as I think of you far away wrestling with pain and death—all alone in that (for others can but watch)—and ready to offer your last priestly sacrifice. But I can and do thank you for your holy example.—Yours respectfully and affectionately,

ERIC D. HANSON, S.J.

This is the sonnet to which reference is made:

OUR LORD'S FEET

"I judge me all unworthy to untie
The shoes from off His feet," the Baptist said;
And Simon at those feet, in utter dread,
"A sinful man," could only prostrate lie.
Yet sinful, weeping, Magdalen drew nigh,
Upon His feet her precious balm to shed;
While Nicodemus in those gashes red
With Joseph wrought, Christ to uncrucify.

And I, good God ! yes I, must touch those feet,
 And kiss and worship them by priestly law ;
 And by those wounds for mercy must entreat,
 And from those wounds must heavenly graces
 draw.

O Lady dear, teach me with purest hands
 To spread His winding-sheet or swathing bands.

The correspondence with Father Hanson may be supplemented by a letter, addressed to Father Hanson's sister :

St Mary's, Clapham,
October 24, 1888.

Dear Miss Hanson,—I am very grateful to you for allowing Mr Byles to show me your brother's letter. It reminds me of what I was engaged in just thirty-eight years ago ! But I was in a foreign country, far away from my mother, and only heard from her about once in six months. When I left home she told me she would rather follow me to the grave than see me a priest. But I am delighted to say that she lived to see things very differently.

I wish I had been able to see more of your excellent brother before he entered the noviceship, for bad health warns me that I can scarcely expect the conclusion of his two years' retirement.

His simplicity and maturity—in Our Lord's sense of the dove and the serpent—made a deep impression upon me, and make me hope much from him should God prolong his life.—Allow me to be, dear Miss Hanson, yours faithfully in Christ,

T. E. BRIDGETT.

The following letter, kindly supplied by the Right Rev. Mgr. J. Vaughan, shows the unselfish interest Father Bridgett ever took in the work of others

who, like himself, were bent on the refutation of error and the spread of the truth :—

St Mary's, Clapham,
April 26, 1888.

Dear Father John Vaughan,—I have read your "Magnitude and Mind,"¹ and am delighted with it. I have often had the substance of your thought in my mind, but you have put it in so lively a way, and drawn out the consequences so cleverly, that it comes quite fresh. Here is a little epigram I wrote many years ago :

ON A METAPHYSICIAN

His years of life he spent in doubts sublime :
What is that entity which men call Time ?
He travelled many a league from place to place
To ask the learned, "Is there really space ?"
At length time passed for him, and all he got
From God or man was space enough to rot !

But that is not *a propos* of your article. Dean Swift's epigram about the fleas is more *ad rem* :

Great fleas have little fleas
To tease 'em and to bite 'em,
And little fleas have smaller fleas,
And so *ad infinitum*.

Is not Gulliver also founded on the thought that size is altogether relative, so that the giant in one land is the pigmy in the other ? I wish I could persuade myself that my size has nothing absolute. But I fear my bones have not grown to scale with increase of flesh. I always greatly admired Dante's

¹ See "Faith and Folly" (p. 190 *et seq.*), by the Right Rev. Mgr. John Vaughan.

wisdom when in his images of Paradise he imagines God as a point of light. St Augustine says the Manichæans thought of God only as a vast expanse. There is a very interesting correspondence between St Augustine and some Pagan gentlemen about the Incarnation. They had great esteem for some parts of Christianity—its sublime doctrine about God—but they could not conciliate this with the idea of God in a small child's body, etc. Their notion of God was vastness of dimension, not of power and love, and St Augustine explains to them this fallacy. If you have never read the letters, they are worth your study.

I have met the same frequently among Protestants, and shared it when I was a Protestant boy : a feeling of the sublimity of God when looking out on the starry skies, and the meanness of a God in a Tabernacle in a poor chapel in a back street of a country town. You may be sure that such notions, founded on material images of size and space, have more to do with heresy and infidelity than is generally thought. Our philosophers are quite as gross in these matters as our peasants. . . . Ever yours sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.S.S.R.

The news of Father Bridgett's serious illness brought many touching letters, which show the mingled reverence and affection with which Bishops and priests, nuns and the laity, men as well as women, regarded him. The following is from the Bishop of Leeds:—

Bishop's House, Leeds,
October 23, 1898.

My dear Father Bridgett,—When I went to Holbeck last Friday evening to give Confirmation Father Vassall told me the sad news about your health.

I deeply sympathise with you, and I pray God to give you patience under this terrible affliction with which He has been pleased to visit you. I said Mass for you on Saturday morning, and soon I will say Mass again for you.

I thank you for the little paper you sent me on the Angelus a little while ago. With my kindest regards, best wishes and prayers.—Believe me, yours devotedly in J. C.,

WILLIAM, Bishop of Leeds.

The next is from the late Bishop of Clifton :

Bishop's House, Clifton,
December 1, 1898.

My dear Father Bridgett,—I met Sir Wyke Bayliss yesterday, and he told me how very ill you are ; so I said Mass for you this morning, and used my privilege of adding the prayers for the dying at the end of the Mass “Pro Infirmis.” I also asked the people to pray for you. I thought I should like you to know that I am not ungrateful for all you have done for me at various times when you have given Retreats at Plymouth and at Prior Park, and for the consolation which your kind and helpful advice has often brought to my soul. May God reward you now for all you have done for others by word and by your writings, and make up to you for those many pains and infirmities which it has pleased Him that you should be chastened by here on earth. They are nearly over now and for ever. When you get to heaven I hope you will remember those whom you have known on earth, and who stand in great need of prayers, and none more than yours very gratefully in Xt.,

W. R. BROWNLOW, Bishop of Clifton.

A priest writes as follows :—

October 17, 1898.

Dear Father Bridgett,—I don't often break down, but I confess when I read your letter I did. I have had a feeling that I should not see you again in this world, and was doing my best to get to town once more. But God ordered it otherwise. . . . You need not fear that I shall forget you. St Mary's, Clapham, is associated with the best recollections of my life . . . and though you and I don't meet very often, I think we have loved and understood each other for close on thirty years, and I hope we shall for all eternity.—Believe me to be, dear Father Bridgett, very affectionately yours.

Later the same priest writes :

November 21, 1898.

Dear Father Bridgett,—I learn from Mr Freeman and *The Tablet* that in spite of your bodily suffering your mind is still as energetic as ever, so I make no apology for worrying you with a letter. I have been reading your "Lyra Hieratica," and also the "Sonnets," etc., reviewed in *The Tablet*. I wish very much that you had the time and strength to bring home to certain folks the lesson of your poem on the Immutability of God. . . . The Sonnet on Bethlehem pleased me and struck me much. Do you remember Hepworth Dixon on the Holy Land ? He points out that Bethlehem is the most undoubtedly authentic of all the Holy Places. The great house at the entrance of the village, near the well of which David longed to drink, was the house of Boaz, the *Sheik* of the village, and consequently, according to Eastern custom, the Kahn or Caravan-serai. It was so even in the days of Jeremias (xii. 17), so that it was natural for our Lady and St Joseph to go there ; and so Our Lord was born in the house

of His fathers, where Ruth had laid herself at the feet of Boaz, where Naomi had received on her knees the grandfather of David, and where David had been born. The stable was probably a cave on the slope of the hill, forming part of the house, and occupying the exact spot that is at present venerated.

My young friend Dom Cuthbert Constable, O.S.B., has gone before you. He died on Friday night. His only Mass was the one he celebrated with the Bishop at his Ordination. You will, I know, pray for him and his family.—With kindest regards, affectionately yours.

Among Father Bridgett's friends were the Von Hügels, and though his acquaintance with them had not been of very long duration an intimate friendship was formed. In his desire for prayers he wrote to a considerable number of friends to tell them of his illness, and to ask a remembrance in the presence of God. These later letters may be prefaced by one from Father Bridgett, dated from St Mary's, Clapham, April 25, 1890 :

My dear Baron,—I was indeed delighted to find that you had not forgotten me. How often have I recalled the pleasant days I spent under your hospitable roof and our little walks and conversations! Obesity and bad health have often checked me when the thought of Hampstead has come into my head. But I do not think I shall let many weeks pass without making an attempt to see you.

Your question about British Christianity has caused me to turn up some old papers. When I was writing my "History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain" I did my best to get an accurate knowledge from all sources of the early Celtic

churches. I had thought of giving in an appendix a vindication of those churches from the *charge* of schism brought by some Catholics against them, or the *boast* of schism made by Protestants in their behalf. I had scribbled very roughly my view of ascertained facts, and a friend had begun to copy out my scribbling for the printer; but, on consideration that the matter was not closely enough connected with the Holy Eucharist, I rejected the chapter, and it has been lying in my portfolio ever since. I have just glanced over it. I think it is just legible to anyone who is patient and not too fastidious, and that your friend may find it useful. Still, it is only supplemental to the seventh chapter on the British and Scottish churches in the first volume of my "History of the Holy Eucharist." I enclose also a pamphlet sent me by an unknown hand. Your friend may keep these papers as long as convenient, but I should like to have them again some day.

Miss Mallock's Essay¹ I shall be delighted to read, but to learn from it rather than criticise. At least I shall only be able to say whether the case is stated so as to bring conviction to me, to whom it is new. It was only last week, however, that I spent several hours in the British Museum looking over the two parts of the *Hyperaspistes* of Erasmus, written in answer to Luther's treatise *De servo arbitrio*. . . . Need I say how honoured I feel at Miss Mallock's kind thoughts about me?

Please remember me most kindly to the Baroness, and believe me, yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.S.S.R.

The Baroness on hearing of his serious illness wrote :

¹ Miss Mallock's essay appeared in parts in *The Dolphin* in 1903. Its title is "An Heirloom of the Protestant Reformation."

4 Holford Road, Hampstead, N.W.

Dear Father Bridgett,—My husband and I are much touched at your writing to us yourself your sad news. Indeed, we will do our best with our prayers for you, and will give our Communion Saturday and Sunday for you, and go on with it. Please pray for my husband and his work, and, if I may say so, for me too, please, who need such help badly. We both feel sure that your prayers will do much for us. We always look back to the time you came and stayed with us, and helped us, though, perhaps, you did not know it. It was what you are, as much as what you said, which spurred us on to try for self-conquest too. We have seen so little of you and yet we feel so much about you, and the contents of your letter are a real grief to us.—Yours most sincerely and respectfully,
M. C. VON HÜGEL.

Baron Von Hügel himself had a severe illness, which called forth the following letter to his wife :—

St Mary's, Clapham,
November 14, 1898.

My dear Baroness,—I have been so much wishing to hear how your dear husband is progressing . . . whose zeal for God and truth I have ever trusted and admired. I sent the little trifle as a souvenir, and to obtain prayers.

Death, you see, has not come yet. I have had a good deal of suffering, but, doubtless, need much more before I am ripe. I find this lingering death hard to nature, but a most special grace. May God bless you and yours.—Yours most sincerely,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

The Baron's brother, Baron Anatole Von Hügel,

also a great friend, on receiving a similar letter from Father Bridgett wrote as follows :—

University Museum of Archæology and of
Ethnology, Cambridge,
November 4, 1898.

Dear Father Bridgett,—Your letter touched me deeply. It was most kind of you to remember me and send those verses. I see they touch on a variety of subjects; and I can promise that the writer of them will not be forgotten, or that the thoughts he suggests will be thrown away upon us.

Your news is grieving, and we shall not fail to pray for you, though it seems like presumption for *us* to pray for *you*. The thought of your work must bring great consolation with it, and I feel sure that when our course has been run there will be few, very few, of us who would not wish to exchange places with you.

The loss to Cambridge on the Board will be great. I cannot think of any but young men who now remain to fill vacancies, and I always feel here that we require the old traditions to leaven the new. However, I doubt if my conservative views are understood at all by the present generation of men actually up in residence.

We have been terribly anxious about my brother these last few days, and that must be my excuse for not having answered your kind letter and thanked you for your book at once. He was taken ill suddenly on Sunday morning, and for some days was in a critical condition. Now, thank God, the doctors have hope, and are satisfied, but we are naturally still anxious; and the case may be a long one, so we want all the prayers we can get. We have had the comfort of Mass in our private oratory for the last four days, and we did not forget you;

and Father Rickaby, who was staying Sunday with us, made a special note of your intention.

All is going very well here, and Father Rickaby's lectures seem to me really ideal. They are well attended, and our Fisher Society meetings (the Cambridge Newman Society) are vigorous, and doing good work among the undergraduates.

Now I must ask you to forgive so long and dull a letter by saying a prayer for my poor brother and us all, and to believe me to remain, dear Father, very faithfully yours,

ANATOLE VON HÜGEL.

My wife joins in kindest regards and grateful thanks.

The next letter came from Mr John Kenyon, at the time staying with Mr Harman Grisewood at Grasse. Both, with their families, were among Father Bridgett's dearest friends :

Villa Marguerite, Grasse, Alpes Maritimes,
November 29, 1898.

My dear Father Bridgett,—The opening words of your letter to *The Tablet* of the week before last, and also what I gather from Harman Grisewood, makes me feel that Almighty God is increasing your pain and suffering here below. Harman asked our prayers for you at his little evening devotions on Sunday, and our poor prayers indeed you have. I know you would not wish us to pray for anything but that God's will be done, though one is tempted to pray that your time of suffering may be short.

May we just thank you once again, dear Father, for all your kindness to us in the past in your visits to us ? And let me thank you so sincerely for your help and counsel and sympathy in Retreats and other times. I owe much to you. We have the

lines you wrote on your visit, when our Lady's picture was first put up—a pleasant and holy souvenir of a happy time.

We have spent a few days here on our way to Rome, in this Christian house, and leave to-morrow. We shall pray for you before the altar of our Lady at St Alphonsus. Please in your many wakeful hours give us a little memento for various intentions, and say a *Deo gratias* for the recent granting of a favour we have been anxious about. . . . Do not, of course, take any more notice of this letter.—But believe me, with great gratitude and respect, yours affectionately,

JOHN KENYON.

Give my love to Father Coffin when you see him.

A representative letter written by a barrister, Mr R. E. Noble, on November 25, 1898, will suffice for others of its class :

I chanced to see in *The Tablet* of last week an article of yours, in which I read the unwelcome news that you were ill. How much you have helped me by giving me a keen interest in Blessed Thomas More you will only realise in another world. You have sketched a model for me on which my life is, I believe, being shaped, and you have made me realise how principle can be worked out in conduct. . . . Please pray for me, and accept my grateful remembrances of all your kindness. Your life of More is getting now well worn and dirty (my edition), and it has given me thoughts for all time ; so has the "Wisdom and Wit."

One of the dearest of Father Bridgett's friends was Mr C. Napier Hemy, A.R.A. It is interesting to get different views of Father Bridgett's many-sided character. Here is a picture of him by an

eminent artist, who was also an intimate friend. The first is Mr Hemy's answer to a request for letters:

Churchfield, Falmouth,
November 22, 1903.

Dear Father Ryder,—I do not think I have any more letters of Father Bridgett. . . . All our correspondence was like the most interesting story, but it *had* to go into the fire. If I could see you I might tell you things, but hardly by letter. Father Lassetter is away, so I don't know if he got the last note I sent him—it had an amusing story of Father Bridgett in it. I think I must write down as they come into my mind some of the pointed remarks he made, though I should have to leave out the most interesting parts—namely, what were the circumstances which brought them forth.

He was a man with the artistic temperament, and could have written the most artistic books. His first attempt, "The Ritual of the New Testament," was the best he ever did. I never could get him *to let himself go*. I told him we did not want to know where or how he got his materials; we wanted the result; and we wanted his words and his personality. But no; he would give us the text—the studies and not the picture. He had the gift of expressing himself artistically and would not use it.

What a splendid man! What a loving heart! He was the greatest friend I ever had. He was like my only friend—and how we loved each other! "Good-bye," he said to me the last time; "if we don't see each other again we will meet in heaven."—Yours ever sincerely,

C. NAPIER HEMY.

Unluckily, the following are the only letters re-

maining of a correspondence extending over more than twenty years. The first is from Mr Hemy on hearing the sad news of Father Bridgett's serious illness from Mr Freeman.

Churchfield, Falmouth,
November 6, 1898.

My dear Father Bridgett,—I have a letter from my father-in-law telling me that you are much worse, and from what he says your trouble appears to have taken a malignant form, and we are not to keep you with us for long now. You are the best friend I ever had in this world, and have been the means through God of helping, more than any other, to place me in a safer and better state of life.

But not only this; there has been so much affection between us on account of our resemblance in many ways, for you also have the artistic temperament, that it is only natural I should feel deeply with you and for you. It is no use, we cannot help this human sorrow; though we know that, like our sufferings, it will be but short lived.

I shall hope to see you once more, and shall come up to town this winter soon now. I shall go on praying for you that God will give you much grace and great courage and patience. Suffering here always must be the shortest road to heaven, for we may have so much as not to be kept waiting for more after our death.

You know all this better than I do; yet there are things which cannot be said too often, and I know that when the time comes I shall be thankful for any old friend who reminds me of all these things. With every expression of warmest affection and sympathy.—Believe me, ever your affectionate friend,
C. N. HEMY.

Father Bridgett's answer was as follows :—

St Mary's, Clapham, S.W.,
November 8, 1898.

My dear Hemy,—I have received a host of kind letters, but not one so sweet and affectionate as yours. God bless you for it. God's Will be done. I would not wish anything otherwise. . . . My one desire is that these pangs may be accepted in expiation of a great deal of spiritual sloth, and that I may grow each hour in compunction as well as in confidence. I have little deserved such a merciful death. In my silly presumption I think I have been wishing for a sudden death, out of cowardice.

I shall be glad indeed to press your hand again should God see fit to preserve me. In the meantime I trust in your help and that of your holy wife, and even an *Ave* now and then from your sweet children. Your excellent governess will, I hope, remember having seen me, and will have compassion on a priest whose account is more rigorous than that of others.

I am sending you a little souvenir. It contains a selection of my favourite thoughts. It shows no great art, except that I have tried to put my thoughts lucidly and pointedly.—Yours most affectionately, T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

Upon the souvenir referred to were written the following words :—"To my very dear friend, C. N. Hemy, a little souvenir from its dying author. Remember me in my last days and after my death."

A few days later Mr Hemy wrote again :

Churchfield, Falmouth,
November 13, 1898.

My dear Father Bridgett,—For more than half my life you have taught me how to live, and now you teach me how to die. Could any friend do more? May God reward you for it!

Thank you for your book. So beautiful and so new and fresh are the thoughts in each little poem that I never thought of the art or the style. You have made each thought clear, and used the most simple words, and I don't see how it could be better. In a fortnight I hope to be free to come to town, and hope you will be well enough to see me. Before your letter came, before Mr Freeman wrote, I was praying for you, and went to Holy Communion for you. I did not know why; and Miss Kelly has had the children saying their morning and evening prayers and the Angelus for Father Bridgett before you wrote to me. So I suppose our good Angels set us praying for you.

I have been able for a week or so to get more often to Communion; and my preparation is not easy: it consists in patiently keeping my fast as I lie awake at night in more or less pain, resisting the temptation to seek relief from some stimulant or sedative. I think of you during those lonely hours at night when you have no one near you, and fear and pain grow stronger and more bitter. But as the end comes, and friends can do less and less, God draws nearer and nearer, and surely we must grow stronger. We hear how at the last a strange joy fills the soul, and becomes so powerful as to overcome and master the suffering. We serve a generous Master, who will not be outdone in generosity—trust Him.—Yours ever affectionately,
C. N. HEMY.

Father Bridgett's answer was his last part in the correspondence :

St Mary's, Clapham,
December 21, 1898.

My dear Hemy,—Your letter is only a new proof of your old kindness. God bless you. It has pleased Him to send me much suffering both day and night. But His grace is sufficient for the hour, as you know even better than I. It takes much pain to kill a man, and if no new complications arise I may live to see you in January. Let us pray for one another.—Yours most affectionately,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.S.S.R.

Mr Hemy's is the last letter :

Churchfield, Falmouth,
January 15, 1899.

Dear old and Rev. Friend,—I have been filled with new sorrow—a pain and a sorrow more than I can express—at hearing from Mr Freeman about your illness. I wrote to Father Ryder about you, but from what Mr Freeman says I can see how difficult it would be to convey the information I asked for in a letter. I also learnt for the first time of the prayers which are being offered for you, and to the honour and glory of our own dear English Martyrs. I hope they will be answered. You are going through a real and true martyrdom, and I humbly beg of you, by our long friendship, to offer up your sufferings for my sins and to pray for me.

I can see that it would be better, perhaps, if I did not come to stay at Clapham, but to go to one of the friends who have invited my wife and self to stay in London on the 26th, and then just to come over to Clapham and see you if possible as soon as I can on the 27th. I find my position in the Academy has brought new duties with it and

new engagements.—With very much love and sympathy, I am, yours ever affectionately,

C. N. HEMY.

There were a number of Religious who looked upon Father Bridgett as a guide to whom they owed many graces and blessings, if not the crowning one of their religious vocation. In innumerable convents prayers were offered up for him, and letters came even from India and America. We will give an extract from one. The writer had been guided by Father Bridgett in her childhood until she entered religion, and, hearing of his dangerous illness, addressed him. At the time of writing she was Superior in a convent in a far distant country:

February 4, 1899.

Reverend and dear Father,—N. tells me that you are very ill, so ill that you are, perhaps, expecting soon to see God! So I thought, dear Reverend Father, as your old child, I might draw near you before you go and ask for a blessing upon my work. From your home in Heaven you will guide me still; and as you guided my first girlhood's steps, so I trust your spirit will hover around me in my religious home. Life is so short; ere long may we hope all to meet near Jesus' Heart.

My prayers will be with you later, as now, dear Reverend Father; and may I beg of you when near God's throne not to forget the many wants of this little community? Once more, and, perhaps, for the last time, heartfelt thanks for all you have been to us! May God reward you for it, and may His sweet, consoling, all-powerful grace bring you safe from time to Eternity.—Your grateful child in J. C.

The Right Rev. Mgr. Croke Robinson was among Father Bridgett's special friends ; but as he lived in London he had continual access to him at Clapham, and hence has no letters to supply, but he most kindly responded, as follows, to an application made to him :—

It will be an undeserved honour to me to be mentioned by name in the biography of such a dear man, whose like I shall never see again, and whose loss is quite irreparable to me. I cannot help grieving that I did not make more of him when with us ! However, it is always so. I did not really know how much I loved him. Oh ! for a safe passage through the great ordeal we all have to encounter, to be united to him again where there is no more separation !

He was my director for years, and decided for me that I had no vocation for the C.S.S.R., but had an unmistakable vocation for what I have done in my priesthood—namely, pulpit work.

He on one occasion asked me if I had ever come across what Cardinal Wiseman had written about such a work as mine, and very kindly copied it from somewhere in the writings of the Cardinal, and sent it to me as an encouragement to go on when, I suppose, I was weary or “ tempted to spoil the good by the better ” (see Appendix II., p. 257).

It seems invidious to make distinctions among Father Bridgett's numerous and intimate friends. We must admit, however, that Miss Mary Lambert, the eldest daughter of Sir John Lambert, K.C.B., who has been already mentioned, held a very special position among them. She was a very remarkable person, gifted with exceptional abilities, equalled

only by her humility and charity. Throughout the history of the Church, from the days of its Divine Founder, we find instances of devoted women labouring side by side with God's priests, like those of whom St Paul speaks to the Philippians: "I entreat thee . . . help those women who have laboured with me in the Gospel . . . whose names are in the book of life." Thoroughly appreciating his work, Miss Lambert devoted herself to the laborious searching, under Father Bridgett's direction, for treasures in the British Museum, copying and translating. Father Bridgett used to say that he could not have written some of his books but for her help. He always wished publicly to acknowledge his indebtedness to her, but she would not allow the least reference to it. Father Bridgett had the greatest confidence in her judgment, and constantly asked for her criticism on what he wrote.¹ There was a very considerable correspondence, which has in great measure perished. We give a few gleanings. The first letter is without date, but probably belongs to the early eighties, during the time of his last rectorship at Limerick, whence it is written :

Dear Miss Lambert,—The post, that brought me your note, enclosing that of Canon Simmons, brought me a similar one from the Bishop of Portsmouth. See what an important man I am becoming! . . .

This morning came your note enclosing my

¹ She died quite unexpectedly at Milford House, Clapham, on March 10, 1899, only three weeks after Father Bridgett's death. *R.I.P.*

Retrospect. I am very grateful to you for its return, since I am heartily ashamed to have sent it to you. I am of the opinion of Thackeray, that autobiographies are most untrustworthy, being written either to get oneself right with the public (if intended for publication), or *with one's own conscience*, which is a still worse kind of deception. Of course, I except St Augustine's Confessions. But as to my Retrospect, though it was no conscious lie, it was written for my mother, to set myself right with her, and I don't trust it. I have torn it up. You are quite right (as usual) about the stiffness of it.

I now send you a sermon I preached at St Francis Xavier's, Dublin, because it *will interest you*. You will see that I have followed something of the line of thought of my Retrospect. The Brother is waiting for my letters. In great haste and with many thanks for your good wishes and prayers.—Yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.S.S.R.

The next was written from West Brighton, where he was giving a fortnight's mission. His correspondent had evidently referred to the hard life of a missionary; and we know how much Father Bridgett suffered, especially from the work of the confessional:

Church of the S. Heart, West Brighton,
June 7, 1885.

Dear Miss Lambert,—Would it not be more honest to beg outright than to sell things of no value? But do as you think well about the Hymn for the Conversion of England.¹ . . .

Yes; our life is hard—very hard for those who

¹ By Father Bridgett.

are continually on mission. A life in a box thirty inches square ! What is the housing of the poor in the East End to that ? Eight hours a day (often more) for six months in the year in a little-ease, unable to stretch the limbs, leaning uneasily on one side ; consuming foul air in a hot and foul church, or in icy draughts ; burnt up in the summer, starved in winter, with the mind on a perpetual strain like a student for honours in his final examination ; hearing things one would gladly forget ; straining to catch whispers, and speaking in whispers, for hours together ; under a sense of awful responsibility ; turning from side to side, now engaged with an enormous sinner, then with a scrupulous soul ; sometimes listening to voluble nonsense, and unable to stop the torrent or get to the point ; then fighting with a soul possessed by the dumb devil, and getting out one sin in ten minutes, like a rotten cork from a bottle, etc. etc.—no one has a conception what a physical, mental, and spiritual torture it all is.

And yet it is full of Divine consolation to the priest who is a man of God. The confessional to a thoughtful priest is the most evident proof of the wisdom, love, and mercy of God, of His truth and holiness, and at the same time of its own Divine institution. Of course, it has its weary hours also. In our big towns amongst the poor, and in Irish villages, the missionary has also to endure the special penance of St Benedict Joseph Labre !

But enough—our present mission is very different. A small Gothic church like ours at Clapham (a little shorter as yet, for it will some day be lengthened), with beautiful altars covered with choice flowers, everything in the church bright, and the floor as clean as a dining-table ; a well-built Presbytery adjoining ; a charming priest, Father Donnelly ; and the people, alas ! too few (250 all counted), devout,

intelligent, attentive. Brighton itself by the sea—the finest thing I know in Europe ; and, to crown all, delicious weather.

Would you write a nice little book of Meditations ? I enclose a plan ; but let me know when I return what you think of it.—Yours most sincerely,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

St Joseph's, Teignmouth,
February 20, 1894.

Dear Miss Lambert,—It is only from you that I ever learn a word about Clapham. From the wonderful sum realised the concert must have been a grand affair, and Protestants must have been far more numerous than Catholics. I wish I had a copy of the Report of a meeting held in Clapham in 1851 against the Papal Aggression, and especially against us. You would see how enormous is the change in Clapham and in public opinion generally in forty years. And yet we have done nothing to influence the Protestants of that part, except to slink about in long coats and old hats—and to pay our bills regularly ! . . .

I do not want the budget again. I can't say I have any pleasant memories connected with that dissenters' school. I was cruelly caned there, though I was only a child ; and, worse still, I had to learn some dreadful catechism on the bright Sunday afternoons instead of playing. They made religion very dismal. But between that and Tonbridge I passed some years at Worksop in a Pestalozzian school (great humbug, but very pleasant) in a lovely country. There I enjoyed myself in a certain sense ; but I have no happiness in looking back to any of my Protestant days—*i.e.* till I was twenty-one. With kindest regards to your sisters.—I am, dear Miss Lambert, yours most sincerely,
T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

As to Father Bridgett's own brethren, it is needless to speak of the affection and reverence with which he was regarded, or of the innumerable letters which poured in from the various houses both at home and abroad. In his last illness we shall see how this tender charity moved him to tears. Not to weary readers, we will end by giving the letter which our Most Rev. Father General wrote to Father Bridgett from Rome. The esteem and affection which it breathes may well be taken as expressing the feeling of the whole Congregation.

J. M. J. A. Th.

Rome, *Janvier* 4, 1899.

Mon Rév. et bien cher Père Bridgett,—Le bon Dieu vous veut donc toujours à la croix ; que sa sainte volonté soit faite. *Transeat a me calix iste, verumtamen non sicut ego volo sed sicut tu.* Si vous étiez à la villa Caserta je me ferais un devoir de vous faire tous les jours ma visite, comme je le fais ordinairement pour les chers malades de la maison. Mais ne pouvant pas vous visiter personnellement je veux le faire au moins en esprit par la pensée, par la compassion, par la part que je prends à vos souffrances cruelles, par mes prières pour vous, enfin par la bénédiction que je vous envoie plusieurs fois par jour. Vos lettres comme celles de vos confrères vous concernant, me remplissent de douleur à cause de vos souffrances, mais me consolent en même temps à cause de votre résignation. Courage donc, mon bien-aimé et très Révérend Père, courage, patience, résignation, amour, conformité, voilà ce que je vous souhaite, voilà ce que je demande pour vous. Jésus dépouillé, flagellé, crucifié, voilà votre modèle. Il est et sera toujours votre consolateur. Jésus Christ veut vous faire participer largement à

ses souffrances, pour vous faire participer d'autant plus largement à sa gloire. Je demande bien pour vous aussi le rétablissement de votre santé pour pouvoir continuer vos travaux salutaires et vos bonnes œuvres. Mais je dois aussi ajouter : *non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu*. Quoiqu'il en soit, mon Rév. et bien aimé Père, je me recommande bien et à vos prières, et à vos souffrances, et à vos mérites, et à vos intercessions devant le trône de Dieu si vous mouriez avant moi.

Adieu, tout à Dieu, et au revoir dans le Ciel. Je vous bénis avec effusion de cœur, et reste à jamais en J. M. J. A.—Votre tout affectionné confrère,
M. RAUS, C.SS.R., Sup. Gen. et R.M.



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CHAPTER VIII

FATHER BRIDGETT AS A WRITER

THE following account of what first induced him to write is given by Father Bridgett himself :—

In putting up the relics of St Urban in Limerick, on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, 1867, I preached a sermon on Relics, and got leave to print it for the Limerick people, as the veneration of relics was somewhat new to them. Shortly before—namely, in September, 1867—I had preached in the Cathedral of Plymouth (after a Clergy Retreat) on Ritual. There was a report of the sermon in the newspaper, and this made me think I could make a useful pamphlet. I got leave to write it, but the subject grew in my mind into a book, which was printed in Edinburgh, by Ballantyne, and called “In Spirit and in Truth.” A second edition, called “The Ritual of the New Testament,” was published by Burns in 1873, which was followed by a third edition.¹

It is well to consider for a while this first, and even now insufficiently known work, which not a

¹ In what is called the second edition the whole book had been recast, and almost entirely rewritten, with more than a hundred pages of fresh matter. The reason, however, of leaving out the first part of the original title was due to the publication of an English translation of Father Nieremberg's ascetic treatise called “Of Adoration in Spirit and in Truth.” The change was necessary to avoid confusion. The original title in full had been : “In Spirit and in Truth ; an Essay on the Ritual of the New Testament.”

few regard as his masterpiece. Indeed no one who has not read it carefully will be able adequately to realise his originality of thought, his quiet humour, his self-possession, and his irresistible strength as a controversialist.

One of the principles of St Francis de Sales in controversy was to take the arguments, and the very texts, on which heretics chiefly depended, and use them for their refutation. This, the Saint maintained, must be done forcibly, indeed, and convincingly, but kindly, and without any show of anger or indignation. These are the principles which Father Bridgett seems ever to have borne in mind. Nothing is more striking than his apparently imperturbable serenity in the midst of a discussion. Naturally he was hot-tempered, and at times gave way to considerable indignation, but when he had his pen in his hand the spirit of prudence, moderation, and peace seemed to brood over him, and guide him. It reminds us of what Cardinal Newman is reported to have said of himself, that when standing up to speak his thoughts would leave him, but the moment he sat down and took his pen in his hand they were there waiting for him.

This perfect self-possession gave Father Bridgett a great advantage over heated adversaries. Readers of the Waverley Novels will remember in "Ivanhoe" the contest between honest Gurth and the outlaw called the Miller. They fought with quarter-staves, and seemed pretty equally matched till the Miller lost his temper, a state of mind not favourable, as Scott remarks, to the noble game of quarter-staff,

in which the utmost coolness is necessary, and in a few moments the Miller measured his length on the ground. So it is, as a rule, with Father Bridgett's opponents. It is true that Dr Cumming and Dr Robert Vaughan, and many others, have disappeared from the thoughts of men, but they were a power in their day, and the prejudices which they represented still exist. Hence Father Bridgett's arguments, and his method of using them, are as fresh and useful now as they were thirty or forty years ago.

In writing "The Ritual of the New Testament" he hoped indeed that Catholics would read the book, with interest and profit, but it was "intended as a help towards the removal of the prejudices of ordinary Protestants." He quotes as exactly expressing his own feelings the following words of Cardinal Manning:—"We owe an especial duty to the class of the English people in which descends the mid-stream of traditional hostility to the Catholic Church—that is, the middle class of educated and industrious men, the heart of English national life, vigorous, quiet, intelligent and benevolent, though darkened by inherited prejudices, and narrowed by anti-Catholic faults. To this class, above all, we have a mission of charity—that is, to preach the truth in patience, and to wait till they will listen" ("The Reunion of Christendom," p. 14). Father Bridgett adds: "If I may be allowed to say so, I have a more personal reason for this course. I have long made my own a prayer with which St Augustine concludes one of his theological treatises,

written against an error of the sect to which, in his youth, he had been attached: 'O great God, O God Almighty and of Infinite bounty, O thou, One God in Three Persons, whom the Catholic Church adores, I humbly beseech Thee, having experienced Thy mercy towards myself, that Thou wilt not permit that those with whom I have lived from my childhood upwards in the closest union should be separated from me in matters which regard Thy worship.'" Father Bridgett goes on to draw a necessary distinction between those who are obstinate in their prejudices and those who are not. He admits that the writers whom he undertakes to refute are among the former, and it is not for their sake he writes, but for those whom they have deceived by their bold and oft-repeated accusations and calumnies. His way of dealing with these writers reminds us of the Archangel Raphael's words to the young Tobias when attacked by the fish: "Take him by the gill and draw him to thee. . . . Take out his entrails and his gall. . . . The gall is good for anointing the eyes in which there is a white speck, and they shall be cured" (Tobias vi. 4, 5, 9). Let us take a passage in the Introduction to illustrate his method of using Dr Cumming:

I may, perhaps, be allowed to say a word regarding the spirit in which our inquiry should be conducted. We have a warning in the words of Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, "Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting: and the same are they that give testimony of me.

But you will not come to me that you may have life" (John v. 39, 40). It is not necessary to inquire whether these words are a counsel or a reproach.¹ One thing is beyond controversy. It is that men may be great students of Scripture, like the Pharisees; that they may have so much love and veneration for the Word of God as to think to find in it everlasting life; yet, at the same time, they may be so much under the dominion of prejudice and passion as utterly to misunderstand the teaching of Scripture, and to find arguments in it for opposing Him to whom it points. They thus find death where they think to find life.

In the particular case of the Pharisees Our Blessed Lord revealed the evil dispositions which prevented the searching of Scripture from leading to any good result. They "had not the love of God in them," and they "received glory one from another" (John v. 42, 44). What, then, is the preparation necessary for a fruitful study? I know that I have no right to preach a sermon while promising an essay, so I will borrow the homily from the pen of Dr Cumming, and content myself with its application. "That we may receive the truth," says the preacher, "that we may reject the error that is often intermixed, in all its destructive and deadly influences, let us pray that the Holy Spirit of God would remove from our minds every cloud of prejudice, and scatter from our hearts every corrupt appetite and desire. And let us never forget that a pure heart has more to do with a true creed than a vigorous or powerful mind. It is not

¹ Different interpretations are given to Our Lord's words. The Greek may be either the imperative or the indicative. St Chrysostom prefers the former, St Cyril the latter. Both Catholic and Protestant interpreters are divided in opinion. The Revised Version of 1881 has "Ye search," and "Search" in the margin.

logic, it is not argument, it is not evidence that men need, for they have abundance of all that : but it is the removal of the film from the mind's eye, the correction of the disturbing and distorting influence of the heart ; and when that heart is made right, and the eye of the mind is made pure, then all things will be seen in their just and beautiful proportions ; the truth will be received in all its purity ; it will be unfolded in all its practical excellence." Beautiful words, and most true ! Alas, that the preacher should have exhibited in his own person the " film " rather than the " pure eye " ! That this is the case whenever the Catholic Church is the object of his vision is but too certain. An example will illustrate what I mean. In the preface to a book called " Voices of the Day," he invites his readers to retire a little from the noises of the world, the din of party conflict, the clamour of infuriate disputants, and to hear, in meditation and in peace, the *Voices of the Day*. Thus invited, I began to turn over the pages of his book, when, to my surprise, at its very outset, I came upon the following passage : " In the great Western Apostasy there is evidence of night—deep, dark, impenetrable—lying on head and heart, and overshadowing both with baleful delusion ! A system is there in which truth is neutralised by error, in which the light is admitted only to be extinguished by darkness, or to be divided and distorted ; in which Jesus is recognised in order to be betrayed, as of old, with a kiss ; a system where the minister of the Gospel is perverted into the priest ; where one sacrament is made a god, and the other an exorcism ; in which worship is pantomime, the Church a sepulchre, and Christianity a gigantic parody."

I read on, and found much more in the same strain. I was reflecting what " the clamour of infuriate disputants " could mean, in the mind of Dr

Cumming, if this was "peaceful meditation," when, consulting other volumes by the same author, I found that this was his habitual language whenever "Romanism" was his topic. "How," I asked myself, "can Dr Cumming see things so perversely?" The thing was a perplexity to me until I read his Lectures on Ritualism, and there found the key to the mystery, and detected the workings of his mind.

In the fourth of these lectures, entitled "Should we confess to God or to man?" Dr Cumming said to his hearers: "In a beautiful poem by Longfellow the Confessional is so justly described that I will trouble you by reading it." He then read the following lines:—

Here sits the priest ; and faint and low,
 Like the sighing of an evening breeze,
 Comes through these painted lattices
 The ceaseless sound of human woe ;
 Here, while her bosom aches and throbs
 With deep and agonising sobs,
 That half are passion, half contrition,
 The luckless daughter of perdition
 Slowly confesses her secret shame !
 The time, the place, the lover's name !
 Here the grim murderer, with a groan,
 From his bruised conscience rolls the stone,
 Thinking that thus he can atone
 For ravages of sword and flame.
 Indeed, I marvel, and marvel greatly,
 How a priest can sit here so sedately,
 Reading, the whole year out and in,
 Naught but a catalogue of sin,
 And still keep any faith whatever
 In human virtue—never ! never !

It is quite evident, from the words by which Dr Cumming introduced these lines, that he wished his auditors to understand that he was quoting

Longfellow's own sentiments, and that he had the authority of the celebrated American poet against the morality of the Confessional. Did he believe this himself? Charity would make us wish to think that he was quoting at second-hand, and that he had never read the context. Yet if he had not read this poem, how could he call it beautiful? If he had read it, how should he not have remarked that the words that he quotes are put by Longfellow in the mouth of the *devil*; and that they in no way express the poet's own estimate of the Confessional? The poem is dramatic. In the lines which immediately precede those quoted we have the beautiful soliloquy of the priest, who has just risen from the Confessional, which I will transcribe, both for its own sake, and because it contains the contrast, intended by the author, to the diabolical view of the sacrament of penance given in the lines which moved the admiration of Dr Cumming :

O blessed Lord ! how much I need
 Thy light to guide me on my way !
 So many hands, that, without heed,
 Still touch Thy wounds, and make them bleed !
 So many feet, that, day by day,
 Still wander from Thy fold astray !
 Unless Thou fill me with Thy light,
 I cannot lead Thy flock aright ;
 Nor, without Thy support, can bear
 The burden of so great a care,
 But am myself a castaway !
 The day is drawing to its close ;
 And what good deeds, since first it rose,
 Have I presented, Lord, to Thee,
 As offerings of my ministry ?
 What wrong repress'd, what right maintain'd,
 What struggle pass'd, what victory gain'd,
 What good attempted and attain'd ?

Feeble, at best, is my endeavour !
 I see, but cannot reach, the height
 That lies for ever in the light,
 And yet for ever and for ever,
 When seeming just within my grasp,
 I feel my feeble hands unclasp,
 And sink discouraged into night !
 For Thine own purpose, Thou hast sent
 The strife and the discouragement !

Longfellow here clearly tells us what *he* thinks of the morality of the Confessional. He may not hold its divine origin, yet he believes that a zealous, pure-minded priest may labour there sincerely for the good of souls. He believes that a priest may hear all those details of human crime, and yet, not only "keep faith in human virtue," but aspire himself to the very ideal of perfection. And then, as if to give force to this view of his own, and no doubt indirectly to rebuke the bigots who think evil of things most divine, he puts *their* sentiments into the mouth of the devil, who, with all his cunning, pronounces a judgment both false and malicious. To find a parallel to this procedure of Dr Cumming, we must imagine a preacher first quoting with approval the devil's opinion as to the virtue of Job, and then attributing it to Moses.¹

Yet I am convinced that the quotation was rather a blunder than a conscious and deliberate perversion. It is, however, the more instructive on that account. For, how came a minister of religion to quote with approbation the sentiments of the devil ? I will not suppose that he remarked whose sentiments they were. No ; he read the beautiful

¹ After this specimen of Dr Cumming's candour, the reader can appreciate the sentence in which he says (Lect. ix.), "I have never met with any man tainted with Romish doctrine who was not also very little reliable in his speaking truth."

words which Longfellow has put in the mouth of the confessor, but, as in them there was nothing in harmony with his tone of mind, they made no impression upon him ; he read on till he came to the devil's speech, and he found his own thoughts and sentiments so exactly echoed that he eagerly marked the passage for future quotation, and pronounced the poem "beautiful." An example like this teaches us, as clearly as a whole treatise written on the subject, how necessary is the "removal of the film from the mind's eye" (as Dr Cumming most truly said) before it can read Scripture aright. The Pharisees, to whom Our Blessed Lord said, "Search the Scriptures, but you will not come to me," read the Old Testament just as Dr Cumming read Longfellow, and as he read and saw everything that relates to the Catholic Church. In contrast with this unhappy spirit of prejudice and hate, the Holy Scripture points to the noble spirit of the Bereans. With one remark founded on this example I will conclude this Introduction. When St Paul announced in the synagogue of the Jews that the Carpenter's Son of Nazareth, crucified at Jerusalem, was the long-expected Messiah, the proposition seemed to the Bereans strange in the last degree, and almost incredible. It contradicted all their previous conceptions. Yet when they heard the Apostle appealing to the very Scriptures with which they were familiar, and giving to them an interpretation which had never occurred to their minds before, they determined to give him a patient hearing, and to weigh the matter calmly. The result was, that they found that St Paul was right, and that till then "a veil had been over their eyes when Moses was read."

Let me suppose, then, that my reader is just as firmly convinced that the New Testament is opposed to Ritualism as the Bereans were that the

Old Testament was opposed to a crucified Messiah ; yet, as I too appeal to the New Testament, let me have a patient hearing, and a calm judgment. Let my readers "search the Scriptures whether these things are so," and the result may be the conviction, that Protestant, as well as Jewish, education throws a veil over certain parts of the Word of God. St Chrysostom, however, makes an important reflection on the words of Our Blessed Lord, "Search the Scriptures." The Pharisees, he says, had been accustomed to read the Scriptures, not to *search* them. They had seen, therefore, only what was on the surface ; but there was a rich treasure hidden beneath the surface, which they missed, because they did not dig for it. If the testimonies to Jesus Christ, who is the very end and scope of the Old Testament, do not lie on the surface, but have to be carefully and painfully sought out, no one need wonder if the testimonies to Ritualism are not obvious to every reader who is familiar with the letter of the New Testament. The real question is, Are they there ? not, Are they there so as to force themselves on the notice of everyone ? They may require a hint, a clue to their discovery, just like the prophecies which spoke of Jesus Christ. May He open our minds that we may understand the Scriptures !

What strikes us most in all his controversial works is his wonderful clearness and strength. He is ever like the strong man, who, conscious of his strength, puts forth just that amount needed at the moment. There is no appearance of effort or strain or anything to suggest that he has come to the end of his resources. This inspired all who knew him, either personally or through his writings, with an almost boundless confidence that he could be de-

pended on in any emergency. Thus one who was well qualified to gauge the effect of Father Bridgett's writings wrote, on receiving the news of his death : " He was one of the best of our captains. I always recognised him as a presence that could be felt in every plane of Church life, and counted on. Let us hope that Father Bridgett, and his great patron, Blessed Thomas More, will put their heads together, and provide a generation of their kind." Later he wrote : " I have ever had the greatest admiration for him. I felt that he stood by himself, and that no one could make good his loss."

In " The Ritual of the New Testament " the most important chapter is the one of which a brief analysis has been given in the chapter on Father Bridgett's " Road to Rome." After reading this book, many have been tempted to regret that he did not devote himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures and their defence against unbelievers. We cannot doubt that had he done so he would have accomplished great and lasting work. We must not, however, lament over what he did not do, but be grateful for the work which, by God's grace, he was enabled to perform.

After this first book his writings were almost all of a historical nature, yet in this there was no violent departure into another train of thought. In " The Ritual of the New Testament " he had considered the Holy Scriptures as the record or history of God's loving dealings with men, which all tend to union with them, and which culminated in the Incarnation, and His abiding presence in the

Holy Eucharist. What, then, could be more natural than that he should turn his attention to the history of the Holy Eucharist during all these centuries of the Church's life? He began, therefore, to collect materials for this work. With the spirit of a true Religious, he was not one to pick and choose his work simply because it attracted him. He has told us how he came to publish at all. It seems almost like an accident. In other words, he devotes himself to the work which God's Providence sends him. We are not, therefore, surprised when he tells us that the occasion of his beginning his systematic search for materials for the "History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain" was another work, which preceded it by six years, and was by no means so attractive. Archbishop Manning (as he was then) had taken up the Temperance question with great zeal, and so the question of the Church's legislation and practice regarding Intemperance came to the front. Father Bridgett, probably at the request, it would seem, of Father Coffin and Archbishop Manning, who wrote an introductory letter to the work, determined to investigate the matter, and published his "Discipline of Drink." While, however, he was thus engaged, he was taking notes on three other subjects—namely, Devotion to our Lady, the Blessed Sacrament, and the Infallibility of the Pope. The last of these he never treated.

The book which appeared first of these was that on devotion to our Blessed Lady, called "Our Lady's Dowry." It was published in 1875. No

work could have been more appropriate for an English son of St Alphonsus. He wrote the following interesting letter when sending a copy to Father Douglas in Rome :—

Bishop Eton,
December 26th, 1874.

Dear Father Douglas,—Burns & Co. will have sent your Reverence a copy of “Our Lady’s Dowry.” In compiling it, I have accomplished a wish I have long cherished. Every time I have read the “Glories of Mary” I have been struck with the proof there given, how entirely poor England has fallen out of Christendom. Our Holy Father¹ professes to collect in that book the tradition of the Church about our Lady, and yet, with the exception of a few passages from St Anselm (or rather from Eadmer, *De Excellentia B.V.M.*), he has not a single English authority. I have been working, therefore, at this book in the thought that I was writing a supplement to the “Glories of Mary.” There are still in manuscript in English and continental libraries many works of old English writers, especially works purely theological; but since you left England very much has been done to edit whatever bears on history, whether national, provincial, or domestic. It is this that made my little work possible. I think you used to be very fond of these old memories, and I often wished I had been nearer to you when composing, that I might have consulted you on many points, especially with regard to Scotland. The Spalding Club collection enabled me to gain many details about Aberdeen.

¹ Non-Catholics may perhaps require to be told that members of Religious Orders usually speak of their Founder as “Our Holy Father”; hence Father Bridgett in the text refers to St Alphonsus. When, as later in this same letter, the term “The Holy Father” is used it always refers to the Pope.

I never could have attempted my collection of materials single-handed. A lady living in Clapham, Miss Lambert, did a good part of this work of hunting up and translating passages in old books in the British Museum. In giving Retreats, too, in St Edmund's, Oscott, Ushaw, etc., I have profited by their large libraries. But enough about my book.

Of course, our eyes and hearts are always turned to Rome in expectation of new sorrows. The year on which we are soon to enter will probably be a very eventful one for you and for the Holy Father. But I am writing on the feast of St Stephen, and cannot forget that, while he fell beneath the stones of his persecutors on earth, Our Lord was looking down on him, and holding a crown towards him, from heaven. We are still in hopes that you will not fall beneath the stones of your enemies; yet we are still waiting in great anxiety. Though the Christians knew that St Stephen had, by his martyrdom, won a great crown of glory, yet "devout men made great mourning over him," and it will be great mourning to us if we hear that the robbers succeed.

May I ask your Reverence, when you show my book to His Paternity, to explain what I have said about the "Glories of Mary," and to ask his blessing for me on the New Year.—Your most devoted servant and brother,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence which "Our Lady's Dowry" has exercised, directly and indirectly, in making Englishmen realise the character of the devotion paid by their forefathers to the Blessed Mother of God. It has done more than any other book to vindicate for England that

title of the Dowry of Mary, which has since been formally acknowledged by the Sovereign Pontiff, and renewed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and all the Bishops of England at the solemn dedication of England to Our Lady, June 29, 1893.

An instance of what may be called literary unselfishness on Father Bridgett's part in connection with this book must not be omitted. While he was collecting the materials for the book, another zealous servant of Our Lady, Mr Waterton (the son of the well-known naturalist, of Walton Hall), was occupied with a similar work. Neither had the least idea that the other was so engaged. It was while Father Bridgett's book was going through the press that Mr Waterton began to publish in *The Month* the first part of some records of English devotion to our Lady. Later on Mr Waterton published what he had collected in a magnificent volume, far too expensive to be popular, and so quite unfitted to take the place of Father Bridgett's book. In the preface Mr Waterton made a somewhat bitter reference to the second title of Father Bridgett's book, which in the first edition ran: "Our Lady's Dowry; or, How England gained and lost that Title." Mr Waterton maintained that England had never lost that title, and was indignant at Father Bridgett's apparent assertion of the contrary. Father Bridgett said that, as he felt there was no real divergence in opinion, but merely in the way of expressing it, he at once wrote a kind letter to Mr Waterton, and so an acquaintance and friend-

ship sprang up between them. In deference to Mr Waterton's view, with which Father Bridgett had the greatest sympathy, he omitted the obnoxious title in the later editions. In relating the circumstances he said that, if he had known in time that Mr Waterton was engaged on his work, he would have gladly handed over to him all his own materials, and have abstained from publishing anything himself. When we remember the labour of many years which the collection of those materials had cost, together with the intense joy it was to him to bring to light the devotion of England to our Lady, we can form some estimate of the unselfish generosity contained in such an offer. But, rare as such generosity is, it was characteristic of Father Bridgett.

The publication of "Our Lady's Dowry" naturally led to Father Bridgett's being chosen to preach the sermon at the solemn dedication of England to Our Blessed Lady by the Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of England, which took place in the Brompton Oratory in 1893. He published his sermon, under the title of "England for Our Lady." In it he gave a fresh proof of his power of historical research in unearthing the origin, and with it the true meaning, of the title of Our Lady's Dowry. It was not a title signifying that England excelled all others in devotion to our Lady, which, seeing that all countries vied with one another in that devotion, they never would have conceded, but it clearly originated in a special gift of England to our Lady as her Dowry on the part of one of her kings, as was commemorated in a picture formerly

over the High Altar in the Chapel of the English College in Rome; and this donation, and the consequent title of Our Lady's Dowry, were not only acknowledged with joyful gratitude by the whole nation, but likewise recognised by all the other nations of Europe. Father Bridgett shows that, in all probability, the King represented in the picture was Richard II.

The dispositions of humility and tender devotion to our Lady in which Father Bridgett preached this sermon are revealed in the following extract from a private letter to one to whom he often poured out his inmost thoughts :—

How little did I think such an honour was reserved for me in my old age. I had a most vivid sense in the middle of the night of the immensity of being, as it were, the spokesman of the English Church to the glorious Mother of God in such a solemnity. I felt overawed and confused, yet joyous. I think St Peter must have felt like that when he exclaimed: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," not meaning a bit the "Depart," but very much the "sinful man."

His next book of importance, which appeared in 1881, was his "History of the Blessed Eucharist in Great Britain." But before considering it in detail we must mention a very small work, both because it throws light on Father Bridgett's devotion to St Alphonsus, and because it serves to introduce a letter to Father Douglas, in which reference is made to this "History of the Holy Eucharist."

There was in Ireland, in the early days of *The Nation* newspaper, a young lady of great talent, named Ellen Mary Downing. She had a special gift of writing poetry, and often wrote for that paper, signing her writings with the simple name of "Mary." Hence she became known as "Mary of *The Nation*." This was in the days when Gavan Duffy was the editor, and when Cardinal Newman referred to the paper as "teeming with talent." Some years later Miss Downing came across the works of St Alphonsus, and an intense devotion to the Saint sprang up in her soul, and she began to long to leave the world and give herself entirely to God. In October 1849 she became a novice in the North Presentation Convent, Cork. Before she had completed her first year she was struck down with a kind of intermittent paralysis, and the doctors declared her unfit for the Religious life. She had to leave the Convent, and she spent the remaining twenty years of her life as a fervent Dominican Tertiary. The saintly Dominican Bishop of Dromore, Dr Leahy, was her faithful friend and Director, and under his advice she continued to exercise her literary talent in writing pious verses and other devotional works. She had taken in Religion the name of Sister Mary Alphonsus, and she retained this name as a member of the Third Order of St Dominic. What, however, was most remarkable about her was her extraordinary devotion to St Alphonsus. Her love for the Saint, and her confidence in his intercession, were of an order far different from what we ordinarily find,

even in holy souls. The Saint, too, seems to have answered her devotion in a manner altogether supernatural. Towards the end of her life, and especially at the time of her death, she had a perpetual sense of the presence of the Saint watching over and protecting her. The Holy See has declared St Alphonsus a Doctor of the Church, and addresses him in the words: "*O Doctor optime, Ecclesiæ Sanctæ lumen,*" because he is indeed a most excellent teacher, spreading over the Holy Church of God the gentle, attractive radiance of the adorable Spirit of God, Who dwells within him. So did the Saint deign to become the special teacher and protector of that simple, loving soul. We have a similar case of supernatural devotion to a patron Saint in the life of the celebrated Père de Ravignan, who, towards the end of his life, seems to have had a perpetual vision of St Ignatius ever with him.

From this we can understand the great interest Father Bridgett took in Sister Mary Alphonsus and her writings. Her sacred poems, several of which are in honour of St Alphonsus, were published under the title of "*Voices from the Heart,*" and the preface was written by Father Bridgett.¹ In 1880 he

¹ Aubrey de Vere thus speaks of "*Voices from the Heart*": "The poems, especially the religious poems, of Ellen Downing (in religion Sister Mary Alphonsus) will be at once the delight of many a pure and pious spirit, and a serious help to it. They are characterised not only by a singular depth and refinement of thought and elevation of sentiment, but in an eminent degree by the humbler merits of felicitous language and harmonious metre. They often illustrate, in a deeply interesting manner, the joint workings of nature and of grace" (*Irish Monthly*, May 1881).

sent this little book, with another by the same author, to Father Douglas, with the following letter :—

Bishop Eton, Liverpool,
July 14, 1880.

Just before leaving Clapham for my new home (Bishop Eton) I sent your Reverence two little books, one of prose, the other of poetry. I had intended to write at the time, but was prevented. If you have had time to look through them you will understand why I sent them ; you will have seen the beautiful devotion that their writer entertained to our Holy Father, whose name she took. But you will not have guessed that I had anything to do with them. The truth is, then, that the nuns at Drogheda pressed so hard that I should write a preface to the poems that, with Father Provincial's leave, I did so anonymously. Our good Father Lans is delighted with the book, and it is his favourite companion. He finishes this evening his ten days' Retreat, and has got through it wonderfully, without breaking down once, though he seems very feeble, and hardly able to speak in the morning. He is quite a treasure in this house by his holy example.¹

We are in great anxiety about our French

¹ Rev. Father John Baptist Lans was sent over to England in the year 1845, by the Very Rev. Father Passerat, who was then the Vicar-General, and governed all the Provinces of the Congregation outside Italy. Father Passerat had succeeded the Blessed Clement Hofbauer in this office. He was the chosen friend and disciple of Blessed Clement, and his own cause of beatification has now been begun. Father Lans was thus a special link between the English Province and these saintly souls. He died, one may say in the odour of sanctity, at Bishop Eton, Liverpool, on 31st March 1886, after keeping his golden jubilee of Priesthood. It was under Father Lans that Father Bridgett made that Retreat at Hanley Castle, just after his reception into the Church, which decided his vocation.

Fathers ; but in this house we know nothing more about them than what we find in the papers. Maldonatus, in his Commentary on St Matthew, speaking of the Gerasenes, who asked Our Lord to leave them lest they should lose any more swine, compares them to the *politici* of his own day, who think more of swine than of God, and turn out Religious to get their property. But things are even worse now. They do not covet our property, but hate us for Our Lord's sake, and are recalling their communistic swine just when they are banishing our Lord. This is a sad condition for a Catholic country.

I was giving a Retreat in Perth a few weeks since, to the diocese of Aberdeen. One of the priests, Rev. Colin Grant, of Eskadale, who has translated the New Testament into Gaelic, was telling me that the people in his part have some old Gaelic verses which they repeat at Mass, or before the Blessed Sacrament. I asked him to get them for me, and he took them down from the lips of an old man of ninety-nine years of age, who learnt them, eighty years ago, from another old man of seventy. So they go back to the middle of the last century, and as there were no Gaelic Catholic books, they must have come down by tradition, probably from pre-Reformation times. Mr Grant has sent the original and the translation, which is as follows :—

Hail to Thee, O Body of Christ !
 Hail to Thee, O King of Hosts !
 Hail to Thee, O gracious Godhead !
 Hail to Thee, O true Manhood.

As Thou wert pleased, O Christ, to come
 Under the cover of bread, Thy whole Body,
 Heal my soul from every evil
 That is upon me now.

Hail to Thee, Blood and Flesh !
 Hail to Thee, food of grace !
 Wash my sins in the Blood of Thy grace,
 Hail to Thee, both Man and God !

Guard me from him that goeth about
 May I receive Thee at the hour of my death
 O Trinity, without end, without beginning,
 Neither let Thy anger be upon me.

Hail to Thee, true Body, born of Mary Virgin !
 By Thy being pierced, shedding waves of blood,
 Holy Trinity, grant us Thy Sacrament
 To-day and at the hour of our death. Amen.

I find such verses and rhymes were in common use in the Middle Ages in England and France, and I have got many specimens of them for my book on the Blessed Sacrament, which is now rapidly coming to a conclusion, and will probably be printed in October.

May I ask you to make a memento for me sometimes, that it may contribute to the Glory of God, and be some reparation for so many blasphemies. I have been able to get a good deal about Scotland. Every few months there comes some new book about Mary, Queen of Scots. I send you two notices of some new papers lately published.—Your Reverence's devoted servant and brother,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

The latter part of this letter illustrates the way he was ever gathering materials for his works, and in particular for his "History of the Holy Eucharist," and also allows us a glimpse of that longing desire to make reparation for all the outrages committed against the Blessed Sacrament.

The "History of the Holy Eucharist" was, in Father Bridgett's eyes, his most important work. It was an immense labour, and he once spoke of the hundreds of works he had had to consult for it. But it was a labour of love. The Blessed Sacrament had converted him, as we have seen ; and he would gladly have spent his life in bringing home to the minds of his countrymen the treasure our forefathers possessed during the ages of Faith, and which they lost through the so-called Reformation.

His own taste for research, which made him say, in the preface to the "Life of Blessed John Fisher," that no books were of such living interest to him as the great volumes of State Papers, made him perhaps underrate the fact that all have not the same attraction. Thus the two large volumes which he published in 1881, and which bring the History of the Blessed Eucharist in Great Britain down to the time of the Reformation, were never popular, and had not the circulation he expected, though intellectual men appreciated the work highly.

One thoughtful priest wrote many years ago to one of our Fathers, saying he was reading the book through for the third time, with great delight ; finding in it history, spiritual reading, and recreation combined. But to become popular the book must be recast. God grant that someone may do it, and so complete Father Bridgett's work of love and devotion, for the matter contained in the book is, indeed, of priceless value.

That Father Bridgett realised the difficulty, as

well as the necessity, of making his work interesting to the general public is shown by the following passage in the Introduction. We give it both because of its own intrinsic beauty, and because it throws much light on the extent of the labour the book cost him, as well as on the enthusiastic love of his subject which enabled him to go through it :—

And here I must make a candid confession ; I have been very often tempted to throw these notes aside, from a deep sense not only of my own incapacity to deal with so awful and mysterious a theme, but of the intrinsic inadequacy of the materials themselves to do justice to it, however skilfully they might be handled. Let me illustrate my meaning by what may happen to a botanist. He has spent years in collecting specimens of every variety of one class of flowers. He has penetrated forests, climbed mountains, crossed the ocean. Gradually his portfolios have been filled, his specimens dried, arranged, catalogued, are almost complete. Two or three of the rarest known varieties alone are wanting, while several new specimens unknown to former botanists give to his collection a special value. He presents it to a museum ; it will interest enthusiastic botanists like himself. Even unscientific amateurs may gaze with pleasure at certain forms and colours. But the collector himself has an experience he can never communicate. Each little dead flower calls up before him not only the brighter picture of its living self, but also the very landscape that surrounded it. He sees again the bleak moor, the dense wood, the lonely mountain where it grew. He remarks once more the nature of its soil, the state of the atmosphere, the accompanying vegetation. And besides such physical facts

as he would at the time have noted down for after-use in a botanic treatise, the faded blossom brings to his mind a personal vision full of joy. He remembers his weary searches, his frequent disappointments, all compensated for on that joyful evening when, just before sunset, he at last found that long-sought and unique specimen. The view from the mountain has, indeed, no scientific connection with the flower, nor was it one of the conditions of its growth ; yet in the mind of the collector the two things are indissolubly united. The adventures of that successful day, the valleys that were searched in vain, the other flowers, that were disregarded, or carefully gathered but do not belong to *this* collection—these things are all vividly pictured in the collector's mind. If he is a simple enthusiast he will expect others to share in his enthusiasm. If not, he will resign himself to what is inevitable, satisfied that, though he knows that only a few trained botanists will be able to appreciate the special value of his collection, it is not a useless contribution to science. His personal adventures, his toils, his disappointments are his own affair. They had their reward, and the remembrance of them is a pleasure. But it is incommunicable.

I may say the same of my Eucharistic gleanings. I cannot hope to make others share my own enthusiasm ; but I do regret that my specimens are so completely separated from their surroundings, and that I cannot show, by pen or pencil, where my flowers grew, and why they grew there and could not grow elsewhere. I do not regret that my readers will never know, nor care to know, how many books I have searched to no purpose, or that one little fact, told in three lines of text, or buried in a footnote, cost more labour, greater research, than a whole chapter of wider interest—these are authors' secrets, and belong to authors alone ; but

I do feel that an incident taken from the life of a Saint loses its interest, and nearly all its teaching power, when separated from its context in that life. To many of my readers the names of Cuthbert, Aldhelm, Thomas of Hereford, Margaret of Scotland, will probably be little more than names. They bring no memories in their train ; so that when I tell how Cuthbert received the Viaticum in his hermit's cell ; how Aldhelm, by the music of his harp, drew the peasantry to Mass ; how Thomas could not offer the Holy Sacrifice without tears ; how Margaret contended against priests and bishops for the Easter Communion, very little of the full meaning of these facts will be conveyed to the reader. Their moral force and persuasiveness depends on the beauty of the characters represented by those names ; but I cannot write a biography of all whom I must mention. The same may be said of national events. I am compelled to treat of them only partially, from an exclusive point of view, however diligently and impartially I myself have tried to study them. All this may seem very egotistical, and evidence that I have not the skill to handle historic themes. Be it so ! Yet dried flowers, severed from the stem, pressed, dried, grouped and catalogued, are, at the best, a poor record of the groves and vales and hills where they grew ; of the dews and rains, the days and nights, the storms and sunshine, that made them what they were.

It had been Father Bridgett's intention to bring out a third volume, dealing with the sad history of the Holy Eucharist in post-Reformation times, but he was a poor man, with his vow of poverty, and when he found that the two former volumes did not sell, a third became out of the question. He had

to content himself with using part of his materials for small pamphlets, such as, "The Defender of the Faith," and articles on the "Test Acts" and the "Coronation Oath."

In 1888 Father Bridgett brought out the "Life of Blessed John Fisher." It was a work of love and gratitude to the founder of his old College at Cambridge, the study of whose life had so materially assisted him to discover the true faith.

In July of that year a correspondence took place between Father Bridgett and Mr Gladstone concerning some mistakes regarding Bishop Fisher made by Mr Gladstone in his article on the Elizabethan Settlement. Unfortunately, we have only one of Father Bridgett's letters :

St Mary's, Clapham Cross, London, S.W.,
July 19, 1888.

Dear Sir,—I hope it will not be an intrusion if I ask your acceptance of my Life of Fisher, just published, and your perusal of a few pages of it, in view of your article on the Elizabethan Settlement.

I will not trouble you with remarks on any other point than the conduct of the Bishop of Rochester, which is, of course, beside your main argument, yet, as you say, an interesting matter (8). I have investigated the conduct of Bishop Fisher in the Convocation of 1531 and the meaning of the title "Supreme Head," as then given, in a special chapter, p. 192. I do not think that Fisher, any more than Warham, ever revoked what he had done in Convocation ; but he died in 1535 rather than acknowledge the same title in the new sense that had been given to it by subsequent acts in which he had no part.

I would also ask you to reconsider your statement (p. 1) that Fisher took the Oath of Succession, and again (p. 9), that the prelates swore without exception. I know but one exception—namely, Fisher—but I think the documents alleged in my chapter on the Oath of Succession (p. 264) and Fisher's own letter (p. 291) prove that Fisher constantly refused to take the Oath in any shape in which it was offered to him.

Lastly (the question still regards Fisher), does not the protest signed by the clergy, which I give at page 260, (against) the expediency of the Act of Convocation (1531), outweigh the petition in Convocation which you call an important document (p. 8), but of the history of which I think nothing is known, and which bears no date or signatures?—I am, sir, with much respect, your obedient servant,
T. E. BRIDGETT.

16 James Street, S.W.,
July 20, 88.

Dear Sir,—I am very glad that my article on the Elizabethan Settlement has attracted the notice of so competent a critic as yourself, for I am above all things anxious to be set right if anywhere in error. And I thank you particularly for sending me your work on Cardinal Fisher, whose part in the proceedings under Henry is of deep interest, though not vital to the argument.

In May, when I was looking up the authorities accessible to me, I had not learned of the publication of your important work. I have read the Preface with much interest, and hope in the course of the next few days to peruse the whole.

My proof was sent (among others) to the Bishop of Chester, who took the objection about Fisher's oath; but I held my ground, and the Bishop finally gave way to the authority of Sander. I think

Chapuys writes to the same effect. The whole history is extremely curious, and by degrees I hope we are learning to distinguish between two factors, unhappily long confounded—jealousy of the King, and submission to the See of Rome in matters of ordinary jurisdiction. Who can wonder that for Fisher a new light was thrown upon Royal Headship between 1531 and 1535? Does not Tunstal deserve great credit for having had the first inkling of what was to come? His protest is given by Wilkins, and was a protest in the Convocation of York, which, however, in its corporate capacity concurred with Canterbury.—I remain, dear sir, your very faithful and obedient,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

16 James Street, S.W.,
July 23, 1888.

My dear Sir,—I thank you very much for *both* parts of your letter. Your view of Irish policy is especially acceptable, because the opposition from your Communion on this side the Channel, in its higher ranks, to the claim of Ireland is in a high degree painful to witness.

I had already discovered that my recollection was untrustworthy as to Chapuys and the Oath. The more material question as to Sander I must reserve until I get to Hawarden, when I hope to examine my own copy with the light which your letter affords.

Your observation on the freedom of the Convocation opens a wide field; but I would only observe at present that you would hardly, I think, extend them to the very remarkable Petition on the Annates published by Blunt.

I hope soon to have an opportunity of making myself acquainted with some others of your works.—I remain, my dear sir, faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

In the following year he brought out a book, in conjunction with Father Knox of the Oratory, "The True Story of the Catholic Hierarchy deposed by Queen Elizabeth," vindicating the character of the Bishops. It would have been a great joy to Father Bridgett had he known that within a few years there would be considerable hopes of the Beatification of eleven of these Bishops as martyrs.¹

The most popular of all Father Bridgett's works is his "Life of Blessed Thomas More," published in 1891. It was received with enthusiasm by his fellow-Catholics at home and abroad. The following beautiful address sent him by the students of St Beuno's College, North Wales, the Jesuit House of Studies, may be taken as correctly expressing the universal sentiment in regard to him and his work:—

St Beuno's College,
June, 1891.

For the last few weeks we have every day been indebted to you for so much pleasure that we think you will not grudge us the further satisfaction of most heartily thanking you. We have been listening in our refectory to your "Life of Blessed Thomas More," and seldom indeed have we heard anything more beautiful or more interesting. It is not, to be sure, the first time we have had occasion to admire and to be grateful for your learning and literary skill; but in the case of this latest work our obligations seem to have made themselves more deeply and universally felt than before, so that we could hardly rest satisfied without

¹ See "The Extinction of the Ancient Hierarchy," by the Rev. George E. Phillips.

in some feeble way expressing our gratitude for your labours and our high appreciation of them. We beg you, then, to accept our congratulations on the work you have done to the honour of the Catholic Church and our thanks for the profit and pleasure we have ourselves derived from it, and we heartily pray that God may bless your future efforts with equal and even greater success.

This was signed by Sylvester Joseph Hunter, S.J., Rector, together with the signatures of the Professors and students—making in all fifty-four names. Father Bridgett's answer was as follows:—

St Mary's, Clapham,
June 10, 1891.

Very Rev. and dear Father Rector and Rev. Fathers and Brothers,—I think you may easily guess the mixed feelings of surprise and confusion with which I read the letter addressed to me by the Community of St Beuno's. If I had heard accidentally from one of your Fathers that my book had been read in your refectory, and had been listened to with pleasure, I should have considered it a great honour. But I am utterly bewildered and confused to have received so unusual a testimony of approval. The first thought that occurs to me is that of the ass carrying the relics. The charm of the character and writings, of the wit and pathos of Blessed Thomas More's life and death, is upon you, and the beast of burden gets a share in the honours. Yet, though I am not such an ass as to take pride to myself for having brought before the public some old and rare, though half-forgotten, relics, I admit that your letter has given me the greatest possible joy. Allow me to explain its nature.

The Breviary tells us that when St Thomas found

St Bonaventure writing the Life of St Francis, he said: "It is right a Saint should labour for a Saint." This notwithstanding, I could never think that no one but a Saint should write a Saint's life, none but a scholar that of a scholar, none but a statesman that of a statesman, or a wit that of a wit. Had I thus thought I should have been insane in attempting the Life of Blessed Thomas More. Yet on the other hand, I did, and do think that a biographer should be able to admire and appreciate that of which he writes; and as I was bold enough to undertake the biography of a many-sided man I had a very natural and reasonable fear lest I should do him injustice, at least in some of the phases of his life. It has, therefore, been to me a great consolation to be assured (as by Mr Gairdner in *The Academy*) that I have fairly presented "the whole man"; for the English public is now disposed, almost for the first time since the Martyr's death, to consider his whole character and career dispassionately. But if the appreciation of literary men relieved me from anxiety, the approbation of your large and distinguished Community has caused a joy of a very different nature. While writing the Life of Blessed Thomas I often thought of what England might have been had such men as he and Blessed Fisher moulded its future life instead of such men as Henry and Cranmer, or Burleigh and Parker. I used also to imagine what would have been the feelings of Blessed Thomas had he lived to see that true Catholic revival in the Church which he had so ardently desired. Amongst other things, I often pictured to myself the joy he would have experienced had he witnessed the foundation and spread of your illustrious Society, where he would have found united the things he loved best—the religious life in its sincerity, the highest intellectual culture, solid theology, and zeal for God and for souls.

This association of thoughts in my mind was a very natural one, for your first saintly Fathers met at Montmartre while More was imprisoned in the Tower; and the last of his descendants, who bore his honoured name, was Provincial of your Society in England. Your letter confirms me in these thoughts; for, why do you by this spontaneous movement recognise in Blessed Thomas More a man after your own heart but because you are yourselves men after his heart? This, then, is the source of my joy. I look over the long list of names subscribed in your letter, some, indeed, familiar to all Catholic England, but the greater part of men whose work is yet before them, and I rejoice in the prospect before us. By your present and future labours the great Englishman will live over again and be multiplied in better days (as I trust) than his own. I am old and infirm, and shall not live to see those days, but I heartily wish you all health and strength in your glorious vocation, hoping, as More used to say, to meet you at last where we all “may be merry together.”—I am, dear Rev. Fathers, yours respectfully and gratefully,

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.S.S.R.

Among Protestants the “Life of Blessed Thomas More” made Father Bridgett widely known, and gained for him a lasting friendship with some of the best historical scholars of the land.

One more book of considerable importance was published the year before the “Life of Blessed Thomas More.” Father Bridgett himself was surprised at the reception it met with, from Protestants as well as Catholics. This was “Blunders and Forgeries.” It was a reprint of seven essays which had already appeared in various periodicals,

but which he enlarged or rewrote. It is pleasant to think that it was English love of fair-play that, in part at least, caused it to have so cordial a welcome.

Of these seven essays Father Bridgett says in his Preface :

I have selected them as bearing on one subject—misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the Catholic Church, for the most part as regards historical facts. There is, however, a notable difference between the two parts into which the volume is divided. In the second part I expose some deliberate perversions of truth, forgeries conceived in open-eyed malice, and handed on to our own days by prejudice wilfully blind. But the first part treats merely of blunders, neither conscious lies nor yet innocent mistakes. To err is human, but there is always blame attached to blundering. In the examples which I have given the blame varies from that of haste, or undue self-reliance, to that of prejudice and willingness, or even eagerness, to believe evil.

Several of the writers whose blunders I have exhibited are eminent in literature, and, of course, far superior to myself in general learning ; yet a common sailor may set right a philosopher or a statesman as regards nautical terms and facts. My contention throughout this volume is this, that the landsman should not swagger about the deck as if he were bred to the sea while he cannot distinguish between a binocle and a binnacle.

There is a well-known saying attributed to a great scholar :¹ " Verify your quotations." Quotations must not only be verified, but traced to their

¹ Dr Routh, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, who died in 1850, in his hundredth year.

origin. The last essay in this volume will show that writers of our day, who take pride in accuracy, are perpetuating old calumnies because, while verifying the correctness of their quotations from Strype, they are content to take on trust the references of Strype himself. A second rule, not less important to the historical or theological student, is: Consult. "There is no such folly," writes Mr Mozley, "no such cause of utter breakdown and disgrace, as the silly pride of doing things quite by oneself, without assistance."¹ In addition, then, to the various historical points recorded in my Index there is a general maxim enforced throughout these essays, which is one of charity as well as of accuracy—a maxim I would willingly have printed on my title-page: Consult and Verify; Verify and Consult.

Father Bridgett's surprise at the reception given to this book must be ascribed to that humility and modesty as an author which had become, as it were, natural to him. It is a surprise which no one will share who reads the book with attention. He displays in its pages that marvellous power, almost like an instinct, which enabled him to trace out and unravel the tissue of lies and forgeries of Robert Ware, who might well in all future times be known by no other name than that which Father Bridgett, [following Ware's own metaphor] so justly bestows on him—a "literary skunk." He gives the following account of the way he came to study the matter:—

I confess that, if one of Robert Ware's books had fallen into my hands a year ago, after turning over

¹ "Reminiscences of Oriel," p. 358.

a few pages I should probably have exclaimed: "Bogus!" and thrown the book aside. It chanced, however, that, being engaged on the history of the Catholic Bishops deposed by Queen Elizabeth, I came upon certain passages in later writers that raised a doubt in my mind, and set me on the investigation of the sources from which they were derived. I thus was brought to read "The Hunting of the Romish Fox," and (to follow up Ware's metaphor) I followed up the scent till I unearthed this literary skunk. Even then I should have been content to have eliminated him and his inventions from my own special subject had I not noted how widespread had been the success of his cheating, and with what singular bias, where the Catholic Church is concerned, and with what incredible carelessness, history has been written.

When we remember that so careful a historian as Mr Gardiner was misled by Ware, and that Lingard and Tierney could not escape from his baleful influence, we can realise how much is due to Father Bridgett for exposing him. This he has done not merely once, but some twenty or more distinct times, each of which required much reading and long and patient study. As the great mass of the abominable and scandalous stories against Catholics, and specially against Religious, which have been told times without number by all sorts of writers, and on what was supposed to be the highest authority, have now been shown to have originated with Robert Ware, it would be difficult to overestimate the influence of this book in dispelling prejudice. Moreover, Father Bridgett has given some excellent hints whereby this wretched

man's forgeries may be easily detected, for, of course, Father Bridgett does not pretend to have discovered all. Since his death these hints have borne fruit, in leading to the exposure of another of Ware's forgeries.

It need hardly be said that Mr Anthony Froude figures largely in "Blunders and Forgeries." In one place he utters a sentiment so outrageous that even Father Bridgett is obliged to say: "Literary courtesy can have no place with regard to words like these—they contain an infamous calumny." These words were well weighed and richly deserved; yet Froude is the one man who ever accused Father Bridgett of a *suppressio veri*.¹

"The Rood of Boxley," in the same volume, is also an excellent specimen of his power as a controversialist. Father Bridgett had shown what exactly the original lie was, and then how it grew. He then gives positive evidence in favour of the monks. He shows how Archbishop Warham, who was their diocesan, and Bishop Fisher, who was their neighbour, must have been either dupes or knaves if the monks were so. He quotes the

¹ Mr Anthony Froude's untrustworthiness seems to be universally admitted by all who have any pretensions to be impartial historians. Mr W. H. Hutton in his "Life of More" when speaking in the Preface of his authorities, says: "Erasmus is the most delightful of guides; but the late Mr Froude's 'abbreviated substitute' for his writings, charming though it is, is far too untrustworthy to be regarded as a serious authority by anyone who has studied the letters and treatises for himself." In a word, when Mr Froude is unprejudiced he is a romancer; when he is prejudiced he often merits the epithet which Father Bridgett applies to him. He never should be regarded as a serious historian.

Archbishop's testimony to the holiness of the place and the miracles worked there. He then concludes :

Let men think as they please as to the reality of the miracles ; certainly no well-informed man will suppose that by miracles Warham means the movement of the eyes or head of the crucifix. Let those, who will, class Warham also among the dupes of a bit of wooden mechanism, if they are ashamed to place him among the abbots and others "in high station," who, according to Dr Hook, laughed and connived at the frauds practised by their inferiors. And then let them have the satisfaction of reflecting how God hid these things from the pious and cultivated Warham (the intimate friend and patron of Erasmus) ; from the learned and saintly Fisher, who, from Rochester, must often have gone to pray before the famous Rood ; while he revealed them to the Arch-knave Thomas Cromwell, the perjured Archbishop Cranmer, the time-serving Hilsey, the debauched and bloodthirsty Henry, and the murderer William Thomas. And while they rejoice over the enlightenment and spiritual insight of the men who destroyed our abbeys, and stripped our cathedrals naked, let them sigh or make merry over the thought that the builders of them were given up, generation after generation, to gross and besotted idolatry.

Nothing is more common than the use of the word "lie" by authors treating of revolt against the Catholic Church. "That a *Lie* cannot be believed, philosophism knows only this," writes Carlyle of the French Revolution ; and this *Lie*, with a capital letter, is of course the Catholic doctrine. And Mr Froude, following his master's lead, writes of the first Protestants in England that they were "men and women to whom the masses, the pilgrimages, the indulgences, the pardons, the

effete paraphernalia of the establishment had become intolerable ; who had risen up in blind resistance, and had declared with passionate anger that, whatever was the truth, all this was falsehood." He calls them a little band of enthusiasts armed only with truth and fearlessness, "who having at last read for themselves the Gospel history," "believed in Christ and not in the bowing Rood," so that "thenceforward neither form nor ceremony should stand between them and their God." All this sounds, no doubt, very brave and very noble. But what if "the bowing Rood" so skilfully thrown in here for the confusion of the ancient Church is after all a *Lie*, a *Lie* deserving of very conspicuous capitals, but a lie first invented cunningly and knowingly by those first Protestants, and since then manipulated and multiplied and propagated by their successors, during three centuries and a half ; not, indeed, with the same full consciousness, yet with blindness and recklessness and eagerness, which are in ill harmony with such grand professions of devotion to the truth.

I trust that this lie will soon go the way of other calumnies. And that I may show that I have no animosity to Dean Hook I will draw the moral of the whole story by employing his own words on an analogous charge—words which do him credit. "Among the falsehoods freely circulated [he says] were those which related to the existence of underground passages leading from priories to nunneries, for the clandestine convenience of those who hated the light because their deeds were evil. But this application of the sewers, which are found upon examination to have gone no farther than the exigencies of draining required, is now known to have originated in men who, whatever may have been their zeal against Popery, had forgotten that among deadly sins falsehood is one, and that

among Christian virtues the charity that thinketh no evil is the first." The sewers, it seems, have been dug up, and the discovery of the cess-pools has checked the further wanderings of the Protestant imagination in that direction. It is to be hoped that some day it will escape from the monastic dungeons and hollow statues in which it has been so long imprisoned.

Father Bridgett had become so well known as an authority that he was constantly being referred to from all parts of the kingdom by persons engaged in local controversy, or whenever a special attack was being made upon some article of our Holy Faith. Speaking on this subject, he once said that, no matter how often or how clearly objections and calumnies might be answered and exposed, they were sure to be repeated. He spoke so strongly that it would almost seem that he thought the refutation useless. Then, checking himself, he said he had once gained a signal and lasting result from refuting such calumnies, and this was in his book "Blunders and Forgeries." His reference was to his exposure of the innumerable calumnies of Robert Ware in the "Foxes and Firebrands" and "The Hunting of the Romish Fox." This he has done so forcibly that in his presence the head Librarian of the British Museum took the originals of this wretched man, and labelled them "forgeries," and then referred below to "Blunders and Forgeries," by the Rev. T. E. Bridgett.

In the success of the Catholic Truth Society Father Bridgett took the liveliest interest. Many of his compositions already mentioned were repub-

lished under its auspices ; and among several small works, likewise published by it, may be mentioned " England's Title : Our Lady's Dowry," in which, within the compass of a few pages, he brings home to his readers the justice of Archbishop Arundel's now famous saying : " We, as the humble servants of Mary's own inheritance, and liegemen of her special dower, ought to excel all others in the fervour of our praises and devotion to her." In the " Flag of Truce " he argues in favour of prayer to the Saints and the use of relics and images from the unsought testimony of Protestants themselves. The " Art of Lying " is a defence of his founder, St Alphonsus, from false charges made by ignorance and ill will. The essay on " The Christian Priesthood " is a simple explanation of the doctrine of the New Testament and the Church on this subject ; while another essay, called " The Reapers for the Harvest," is designed to enkindle in the laity a great esteem for the clergy who labour in the Master's harvest, and at the same time to excite them to do all in their power, through prayer and active co-operation, for the increase of the ranks of these servants of their Lord. The list of Father Bridgett's share in the Catholic Truth Society publications (putting aside reprints already mentioned) is closed by a recent pamphlet, in which, with the approval of His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, he urges the daily ringing of the Angelus Bell and the recitation of the Angelus prayers with the special end of praying for the conversion of England.

He kept up the habit throughout his life of always writing his sermons, even those he had to preach on the most ordinary occasions, so that at his death they formed more than twenty manuscript volumes. But, of course, very few were ever published, or, indeed, ever intended to be. However, there are exceptions, because occasionally some special cause would lead to a request for their publication. Thus, for example, the Retreat to men which he gave to the Holy Family Confraternity at Limerick was twice printed, and largely sold. A sermon preached by him at the reopening of the church at Adare, restored by the late Lord Dunraven, made the foundation of a historical sketch of that unique cluster of mediæval buildings for which Adare is so well known. A panegyric on Pius IX., delivered in Nottingham Cathedral in 1878, was printed; and so also were the words which he spoke at the funeral of his old friend, Sir John Lambert, at Salisbury. Another sermon, which we must not pass over, was preached at Clapham in 1885, on the occasion of the death of the Right Rev. Robert Aston Coffin, Bishop of Southwark, Father Bridgett's former Superior and lifelong friend, whom he called his father and guide. What the English Province of the Redemptorist Congregation owed to Father Coffin we can gather from Father Bridgett's words regarding his own obligations:

Before I enter on this subject [he says in his Introduction] may I be allowed to say that I count it as one of the special graces of my own life

to have enjoyed the intimacy of Father Coffin—let me thus call him, since thus I knew him—for more than thirty-three years, and during the greater part of that time, while he was my father and guide, he made me the confidant of his innermost thoughts, and opened to me thoroughly a noble and generous heart. I shall have little to say that I have not heard from his lips or seen with my own eyes.

It had been Father Bridgett's earnest desire for many years to see a foundation of the Redemptoristine nuns in England. It was, therefore, a labour of love to him towards the end of his life to welcome them to Clapham, and to preach at the opening of their first foundation in July 1897. His discourse was expanded into an explanation of their life and special vocation. One passage affords a good example of his playful wit. He was very fond of air, and as long as he was able to go about he delighted to climb to the top of an omnibus. From this eminence, while passing up Grosvenor Place, he had often noticed on the top of the wall surrounding the Royal Gardens, attached to Buckingham Palace, an iron bar armed with spikes. He was impressing on his audience the true meaning of enclosure, which is not an imprisonment, as the world affects to believe, but a shutting out of that world which the nuns desire to leave. This he illustrated by this iron bar and these spikes, which, he said, were not placed on the top of the wall to prevent Her Majesty and her maids-of-honour from attempting to scale it, but to secure them from intrusion.

There was one other literary work which for

several years he contemplated writing—namely, a Life of his Holy Founder, St Alphonsus. Superiors as well as his Religious brethren had urged him to undertake it. He had even paid a visit to Naples and to the various scenes of the Saint's life. He had gathered photographs and maps and anything of interest that could illustrate it. This was in the October and November of 1891, nearly eight years before his death, and the same year in which he brought out the "Life of Blessed Thomas More." There were, however, special difficulties connected with the undertaking, which made him put it off from year to year, until, alas ! it was too late.¹

We will end this chapter with a paper printed in *The Irish Monthly* (vol. xxi. p. 238), to which he so often contributed, which is an excellent specimen of his writing, and shows his artistic temperament, to use Mr Hemy's words, as well as the depth and beauty of the thoughts he derived from his studies of Holy Scripture. It is called :

THE TWO MOTHERS : A CONTRAST

Why has no artist chosen for his subject Eve embracing her first-born child ? It would seem a subject only less charming and sublime than that of the Virgin Mother with the Infant Jesus. Eve as she came from the hands of God, the very type of female beauty, the helpmate like to the great forefather, embracing their first offspring, the first human babe ! What freshness, what grace, what sublimity in this picture !

¹ Father Bridgett handed over his notes to Father Castle, who in this same year 1906 has brought out from the French and edited with copious notes and additions the Life of St Alphonsus, which Father Bridgett did not live to undertake.

Yet no ! the instinct has been right which has assisted the artist's hand. That picture could not be painted. As well paint Judas in his childish gambols as Cain receiving the caresses of his mother. Paint Eve bending over the lifeless body of the "just Abel," then all will be true in sentiment. The mother seeing her own work now for the first time consummated in and by her own children. What heart-rending pathos ! yet relieved by the thought that if one child is a murderer the other is a martyr. Yes ; the first death, not the first birth, is the proper subject for the artist's pencil. And yet we would like to dwell upon that first birth, if only to enhance by contrast the picture which we love so well—of Mary with the Infant God.

What mysterious expectations must have been those of Eve awaiting the birth of her first babe ! A babe ! that word is sweet to the human race. We have all been babes once, and though our memories reach not back to that mysterious stage of our being, yet our consciences salute it without remorse. Freedom from "all malice and all guile"—such is the conception which associates itself in our mind with "new-born babes" ; and, as St Peter reminds us (1 Pet. ii. 1, 2), it is the ideal which the perfect Christian strives to realise. But if there is beauty in the very word babe, what joy is there to the young mother that she is soon to clasp her own babe to her bosom, and what eager and wondering expectations mingle with the prayers which she sends up to Him "of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named," and to her whose glad maternity reversed the sentence passed on Eve : "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." If those words agitated the heart of Eve with remorse and fear, yet the expectation of her first babe must have had in it a joy and a mysterious wonder, such as no mother has ever since experienced. She

was expecting not merely her first babe, but the first babe of the human race. She could form no picture in her mind of human being but as her husband or as herself. What a cry of wonder as well as of joy is in those words which she uttered when first her eyes rested on her child: "*Possedi hominem per Deum*"—"I have obtained a man-child by the power [or the gift] of God" (Gen. iv. 1). In accordance with this sentiment, the parents named this child Cain—*i.e.* Possession. It must have been a strange joy for Adam when God brought to him Eve, so mysteriously created from himself, so like, yet so unlike, himself. But the wonderment must have been greater still when Eve brought to him their first babe. Was it joy or sorrow that then predominated? Did laughter brighten or tears dim those parents' eyes? That smooth, soft face, how unlike the noble features of Adam or the loveliness of Eve! And yet they both see in it their own image. Those little arms, unable to lift themselves, will they grow some day to be like the robust limbs of the father? Yes; for are they not doomed to till the ground till the sweat rolls down the brow? But their child speaks not! Speech had been created with Adam, and had been born with Eve in her mysterious birth. They had spoken to and understood each other at their first meeting. And now their child has no speech! He utters no sound but plaintive cries of pain, and answers no questions of his eager and pitying parents. Will it be always thus? How many questions of wonder, perplexity, and fear must those first parents have put to each other? which only time or revelation could solve. Yet we can hardly doubt that in those first days, when they gazed on their little Cain, their possession, their treasure, and as each month, each year, he entered on some new phase of that childhood and youth

which they had never known, gladness, joy, and even laughter must have been often in their hearts.

Cain, too, was a new pledge of love. He was a new link between those two beings, so wondrously united in their origin, yet so grievously wrenched asunder by their fall. Adam and Eve meet once more in Cain. He is the child, the possession, of both. "He is *our* child," they say as they converse together.

The picture we have been contemplating is full of charms. Why, then, is it unsuited to the artist? Alas! we cannot look on that child as those fond parents looked. We know now what they did not know then. The caresses of Eve lavished on her babe make us shudder, for she is caressing a murderer. Poor mother! God, in His mercy, hid this from her. "*Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof.*" He would not add sorrow upon sorrow in her childbirth by unfolding the future.

But the day was come at last when Adam and Eve knelt by the corpse of Abel. They looked into his face, but there was no response from the glazed eyes. They called him by his name, but there came no answer from his lips. They raised his arm, but it fell heavily back to earth. They saw the life-blood which had oozed from a great gash in the head, and they understood it—this was Death. This was the punishment of sin, on which they had so long and so often meditated and conversed. Fain would they have kept with them the lifeless body, but it grew livid, yellow, black, and corruption warned them that they must hide beneath the earth their own offspring, since "*Dust they were, and unto dust they must return.*"

And this first and most hideous death is the work of their first-born. Must not the bitterness of Eve at the death of Abel have been increased by the memory of the joy with which she had welcomed

Cain into the world? Could she have then foreseen when she cried: "*I have gotten a son through God*," that her son would live to shed his brother's blood, that God would lay a *curse* upon him for his haughty impenitence, that the earth would refuse him its fruits, and that he would be a fugitive and a vagabond among men, instead of clasping him to her bosom with joy, Eve would have let him fall with horror from her arms. It is because we feel and know this that "Eve caressing her offspring" is no proper subject for the artist.

And it is because Mary reversed all this in *her* child that all generations love to contemplate her joy, and all great artists vie with one another to represent it.

Sursum corda! Though we can reach but glimpses of Mary's divine joy, it fills our hearts with gladness. The Church has instituted a feast of Mary's Expectation, and Saints have fallen into ecstasy when they have contemplated that eager and ardent longing of the virginal and maternal heart for the birth of that "*Holy, that should be called the Son of God.*"

Oh! with how much more depth of meaning, as well as with how much greater wonder and joy, than Eve, must Mary have exclaimed on Christmas night: "*Possedi hominem per Deum*"—"I have obtained a child by God's gift, by God's operation, and my child is God!" With what ineffable joy, as well as with what mysterious awe, must she have first gazed on those features which shall gladden Paradise for ever! With what an ecstasy of humility must she have seen her own likeness in Him who is the express Image of the Father!

Pagan sculptures would represent Hercules caressing a child, because the hero's strength was enhanced by the weakness to which it condescended. But the Almighty God become a child! The power

of God Incarnate in weakness—what a marvel for faith, what a sublimity for art, what a joy and adoration for Mary ! But oh ! who can conceive the sentiments of that Virgin Mother ? She looks down into the manger, and she says, with all a mother's love : “ This is *my* child.” She looks up to heaven, and she says, with all a creature's adoration : “ O God ! this is Thy child.” And then she adds—yes, she, a creature of God's hand, and a creature little in her own eyes : “ O my God and my Creator, O Eternal Father, this is *our* child.” God and Mary meet in Jesus ! God has given His Son to Mary as a pledge of His love ; Mary gives her Son back to God as a pledge of her love. Jesus is the link between the Heavenly Father and that humble maiden. She converses with her “ Father who is in heaven ” about their common Son in a language unknown to men or angels ; she loves each of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity with a love different, not only in degree, but in kind, from that of any other creature. What a contrast between Jesus the Saviour, the link between God and Mary, and Cain the murderer, the link between Adam and Eve !

But is the foreknowledge of the death of Jesus no drawback to Mary's joy ? And does not the knowledge of His death and her *dolours* jar on the harmony of our feelings as we contemplate the young mother and her lovely Babe ? On the contrary, it deepens that harmony by striking a new chord of love and gratitude in our bosoms. When we gaze on the beautiful picture of the tender Virgin and the smiling Child we do not wish to forget that already both of them know what awaits them in after years, and both of them accept it all. We know that in the instant of His conception the human soul of Jesus exclaimed : “ *A body hast Thou fitted to me. Behold I come to do Thy will, O God* ” (Heb. x. 5). We know that Simeon was

allowed to linger on the earth to have the sword of sorrow plunged in Mary's breast. Yet we know that he did it while singing his song of triumph over the child who should be "*a light to the revelation of the Gentiles.*" That light is still shining in our souls while we gaze on the Mother and the Child; it is shining still more in Mary's soul while she gazes on her Babe. It shone upon her when the sun was eclipsed on Calvary. Wherever we look on Mary, that light of our salvation, purchased for us by her generous sacrifice of her Son, bathes her in a golden splendour. She is no longer a mere gladsome mother rejoicing over her first-born, nor even the mother of our God dazzling us with her dignity; she is the mother of our Redeemer, she is our own mother, loving us so "as to give for us her only-begotten Son," after the example and with a charity like that of our Heavenly Father.

As, then, the thought of the future years of Cain mars the picture of Eve's delight, so the thought of the future years of Jesus enhances the picture of Mary's embraces. Mary shall, indeed, weep over the dead body of Jesus, slain by wicked hands, as Eve wept over that of Abel; but "*the Blood of Jesus speaketh better things than that of Abel*" (Heb. xii. 24): the blood of Abel cried up to Heaven for a curse, the Blood of Jesus cries for a blessing. Therefore, when we think of the two mothers, we say to Mary: "*To thee do we cry, poor, banished children of Eve—oh! after this our exile, show to us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus; O clement, O tender, O sweet Virgin Mary.*"

Some modern Protestants, in their incomprehensible annoyance at any allusion to the Blessed One, will not see any mention of Mary in the great promise made to Adam. Milton took a juster view. When Michael has foretold to Adam the Incarnation of the Son of God, Adam exclaims:

“ Now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have search'd in
vain,
Why our great Expectation should be call'd
The seed of woman : Virgin Mother, hail !
High in the love of Heaven ! ”¹

Alas for the Christian who, gazing on that picture
of Mary and the Infant Jesus, does not exclaim
with Adam : “ Virgin Mother, hail ! ”

¹ “ Paradise Lost,” bk. xii. p. 376.

CHAPTER IX

FATHER BRIDGETT'S VERSES

THOUGH Father Bridgett never wrote verses except as a relaxation from more serious work, still, quite apart from the special place which he may deserve for his deep and beautiful thoughts, and his graceful mode of expressing them, they are so characteristic of their author that they bespeak a chapter of his biography.

Father Matthew Russell, S.J., brother of the late Lord Chief Justice, claims to have been the first to induce him to print some of his verses. He was a friend of long standing ; and in an interesting Memoir of Father Bridgett, published in *The Irish Monthly* shortly after Father Bridgett's death, he thus writes :

I think I can claim the merit of being the first to induce Father Bridgett to print some of his writings, about the year 1870, when we lived near each other in Limerick. Father William Maher, S.J., of Farm Street, London, was then editing the English *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, which at that time was a sixpenny magazine. Father Maher was one of those editors, generally the most efficient, who never write a line themselves, and he allowed an Irish *confrère* to fill a good deal of his space each month with his own prose and verse,

or with the prose and verse that he induced friends to place at his disposal. The many contributions which in the first eleven half-yearly volumes bore the signatures W. L., M. R., T. A. F., P. F., R. M., A. D., J. M. M., and W. H., came from and through the Crescent,¹ Limerick; and to these were added through the same medium T. E. B., F. H., and E. V., for Father Bridgett, besides his own, communicated some very devotional pieces by his *confrères* Father Hall and Father Vaughan, C.S.S.R. His first contribution to *The Messenger* seems to be "Brother Giles and the Theologian" (April 1870), which, under the title "Daily Grace" is the second last in his volume "Sonnets and Epigrams on Sacred Subjects," published in the last year of his life. But he has left many beautiful poems of this series uncollected. He seems to have gathered by preference his shorter pieces, as if to justify a remark he makes in one of his letters to me: "Like the fat little robin, my muse has a very short song and very short flight, but not so pretty a note." Some of his prose contributions before 1873 were "The Two Mothers" (so beautiful that I could not refrain from using it again in *The Irish Monthly*), "Protestant Testimony in Favour of Prayers to the Saints," and "Good Friday in England." Father Bridgett's contributions to *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart* ceased in 1873, for the summer of that year saw the birth of *The Irish Monthly*, on which he was so good as to bestow his shorter pieces from time to time ever after.

By this time Father Bridgett had been removed from Limerick to London, whence he addressed to the editor of the new magazine a letter of encouragement :

¹ The Jesuit House.

Your periodical does, indeed, open with much promise. It is just what we wanted. I confess I have not read the Dean's contribution. Aubrey de Vere has quite caught the sententious style of the ancients, but I doubt much that any eremite of the fifth century would have taken the view of marriage in the paper "Human Affections." I cannot find Ambrosius in the *Bibliotheca Maxima*. I greatly suspect the eremite dates from Co. Limerick rather than from the Apennines.

May I enclose for your perusal a letter I received from the late Father Cogan, who wrote with so much industry the history of the diocese of Meath? I think I had mentioned to him a scheme of this sort: the history of Irish Martyrs or Confessors, belonging to a diocese, to be printed in very cheap form—the Bishop to speak on the subject to his clergy; each priest to speak to his own people, and distribute the Lives, or sell them. Then a collection to be made towards a monument to be erected in the cathedral to the Martyrs of the diocese. Major O'Reilly has already compiled materials for the whole of Ireland. Such parts as belong to a diocese could be printed separately and cheaply.

By the way, do you know Father (commonly called Abbé) Sullivan, Curate at Kingstown? I think he could and would contribute to your pages. I can say nothing as yet as to whether I may be able to do something. I suppose you are flooded with suggestions as to what you should do rather than with assistance to do it.

Father Bridgett's earliest contribution to *The Irish Monthly* seems to be "Knowing and Doing" (1875), a rhymed homily on Our Lord's words: "If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them." Two letters referring to Judge

O'Hagan's translation of "The Song of Roland" were addressed to Father Russell from Bishop Eton, Wavertree, Liverpool :

Dear Father Russell,—I am much flattered by the proposal you make, that I should review Mr O'Hagan's book ; but I must really decline the honour : it requires a very different hand from mine. It must be reviewed by one who has made literature, and especially poetry, a study. Mr de Vere or Mr M'Carthy could do such a book justice. As for me, I can enjoy poetry, and I think I know when it is good, but I have never learnt to analyse the source of my impressions. Besides that, the poem in question to be properly criticised demands a critic well conversant with the original and with that species of literature, and, of course, I know nothing whatever about it. I have far too great a regard for Mr O'Hagan (with whom I have long been acquainted, though only at long intervals) to let his merits be obscured by my clumsy praise.

In another letter (May 1881) Father Bridgett, the author, writes to Father Russell, the reviewer :

Bishop Eton, Wavertree, Liverpool,
May 6, 1881.

I forgive you, but it is a heroic act. If faint praise damns, exaggerated praise makes its object either ridiculous or odious. How could you say all those things about me and my books ? I have little enough humility, God knows ; yet even the love of my own literary offspring, which is a potent form of self-love, can only make me accept as belonging to me "patient accuracy of research and careful moderation of statement," and of these two the former is mine only in the sense of "patient

research after accuracy." But "refined style"! Something like that of my old coat or my own obese personage. However, I do not mean to accuse you of blarney; but you are too good-natured, and I am very grateful to you personally, though a little bit ashamed and awkward at such mighty eulogy. I am so glad that Mr de Vere has written those beautiful lines "Filia Mariæ" and the appreciative note about Sister Mary Alphonsus.

Another letter refers to Father Russell's little prayer-book in verse, "The Harp of Jesus," which was published in 1890, the Preface to which contains these words: "The metrical form of these prayers may help children—and perhaps, too, some 'children of a larger growth'—to learn a few of them by heart, and they may occur to the memory in moments when ordinary prayers would not be available":

As self is sure to be the first thing to occur to my mind, your little book at once reminded me that in a notice in *The Dublin Review* of Canon Simmons' "Lay Folk's Mass-Book" I expressed a wish that the usage of our ancestors of rhymed prayers might be restored by someone; and again I returned to the subject in the fifth chapter of the second volume of my "History of the Holy Eucharist," and again in the sixth, giving a few specimens in Norman-French, Old English, and Gaelic.

I daresay you know what is called "The Children's Mass." I think it is in use in Marlborough Street. I think it was in the first year of my priesthood that Father Furniss and I concocted those rhymed prayers. He wrote it in prose, and I had to put it into rhyme; but he would allow no inversions, no

hard words, and though it has done good service it might well be improved. I see you have not written prayers for Mass. Perhaps you have reserved them for a second volume. I hope you will do it. I shall certainly be one of the "children of a larger growth" (very much larger) who will get by heart and use many of your beautiful lines.

Did you ever read the "Tale of Tintern," by the late Father Caswall? If not, ask Father Rector to get it at once (Burns & Oates, only 2s., I think). It is one of the most charming poems in the language as a poem, and quite unique as being about our Lady. If you get it at once it will inspire you with a beautiful article for May. They will, of course, send you the second edition; but it is a curious fact that the first edition was written in ten-syllable lines. The second is in eight syllables; but though it is entirely rewritten not one word is said by the author regarding the change. The second edition is greatly improved.

Most of Father Bridgett's verses are, as the title of his published volume expresses, on sacred subjects.

In all that he wrote, even in the lighter epigrams, faith was the motive power. He might well have taken the words of the one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm for his motto: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee; *if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy.*"

The first illustration on devotional subjects we give supplies us with the keynote to all his verses:

POETRY OF NATURE AND OF GRACE

There are who in the vault of Heaven
See naught but clouds and sky ;
And where imperial oceans spread
Mere rolling waves descry.
But poets true to nobler gifts,
And to their author true,
In all things grand, in all things sweet,
The God of nature view.
They see Him in the trembling flower
As when the lightnings flash ;
They hear Him in the linnet's note,
As in the thunder's crash.
And still they sing in forest glade
And on the mountain's brow :
" Thy works are beautiful, O God,
More beautiful art Thou ! "
Sing on, sweet poets, till your songs
Men's earth-bound fancies raise,
Till every heart be stirred to love
And every tongue to praise.
But though I may not roam with you
Beneath the forest trees,
Nor leave my narrow white-washed cell
To drink the mountain breeze :
Though I must sit long weary hours
Behind the sacred grate
Where penitents with broken voice
Their mournful tale relate :
Though I must follow day by day
Th' unvarying convent's bell,
Which bids me to the altar mount
Or pray within my cell :
Yet think not poetry will scorn
A weary drudge like me,
And fancy fly from such a round
Of dull monotony.

Ah ! no ! within the convent walls
 In study or in prayer,
 And in the round of priestly toil
 There yet are visions fair.
 No gleam of beauty half so bright
 E'er greeted poets' eyes,
 As floats around that Sacrament
 Where Jesus hidden lies.
 The poet sees the love of God
 Upon the perfumed flower
 And bows when tempests rend the skies,
 Before th' Almighty's power.
 But ours the nobler joy to watch
 The flow of heavenly grace
 And through sad histories of sin
 God's patient mercy trace.
 We see the blush of holy shame
 Which sunsets might adorn
 And souls which contrite tears have washed
 Shine brighter than the morn.
 And on the weary priest full oft
 Our Lady's beauty gleams,
 And through the night of trial and toil
 She cheers him with her beams.
 For faith has more than earthly charms
 For eyes that love to see ;
 And Holy Church is flowing o'er
 With Heaven's own poetry.

Other verses give us the key to his missionary spirit :

A MEDITATION IN A CROWD

How say men, in the city's roar
 God's voice must needs be drowned,
 And in the city's myriad sights
 No trace of God is found ?

I hear His Holy name proclaimed
By these discordant cries,
Better than by the thunder-peals
That roll in autumn skies.
The murmur of the forest pines,
The voice of ocean's strife,
Say not to me, "*Thy end is God,*"
Like the vast stream of life.
Here souls immortal hurrying seek
Their cravings to appease,
But farther still, as they advance,
Their soul's horizon flees.
The goal of all is happiness,
Whatever road they try,
While every onward step proclaims
Earth does not satisfy.
Those busy streets to thoughtful minds
Are proofs of Paradise,
While with tumultuous voice they cry :
"God only can suffice."
And cities tell this truth of God
Not writ in Alpine snows :
"*God's shadow makes the toil of earth,*
God's substance heaven's repose."
For good God's shadow is, and all
Some seeming good pursue,
And all seek God unconsciously
On false roads, as on true.
Hearts made for God, for God must seek
In universal quest,
And those that seek aright shall find,
And finding shall have rest.
While Athens built her myriad fanes
To every idol known,
One altar to the "Unknown God"
Disproved her gods of stone.
And Paul bewailed that sons of God
For God should blindly grope,

And felt his heart within him burn
 To teach a surer hope.
 So here in fanes to Passions built
 Ten thousand hearts seek rest,
 Yet restless all, and craving still,
 An "Unknown God" attest.
 Then let us mix with men, and share
 Their pleasure and their pain,
 Turning our hearts and theirs to God,
 Lest all our lives be vain.
 Deep thoughts of God may fill the soul,
 In wood or lonely glen :
 But love of God, who died for man,
 Leads back to haunts of men.

In reading some of these pieces we must bear in mind that the author had not prepared them for publication. We take them as we find them. In some instances, on the other hand, verses that were published suffered alterations which will leave some readers free to prefer them in their first draft—that which is, therefore, here preserved.

When he wrote verses without any idea of publication, simply for the recreation of his companions, he was far freer to express his thoughts. It is what is characteristic of his subject that the biographer seeks, rather than what is worked upon to satisfy the critic.

The next piece has the interest of referring to an incident in the author's life, when as a youth he was, with some companions, overtaken by darkness, and in some considerable danger, on the Old Man Mountain, Coniston, in 1846 :

CLOUDLAND

We reached the mountain's highest peak,
Above was sky alone,
The clouds, that o'er the valley soared,
Beneath our feet were blown.
And on that moving sea of clouds
The autumn sunset fell,
With light and shade more beautiful
Than I have skill to tell.
The watery mass a landscape seemed
Fairer than that it hid ;
Bending and varying its forms
To all our fancy bid.
A golden ocean slumbered here
Upon a crimson shore ;
There mountains rose, there stretched a park
With castles dotted o'er.
And long we gazed upon the scene
Enraptured with delight,
Nor thought upon our long descent
Before the falling night.
But see ! a bank of western clouds
Has blotted out the sun,
And suddenly the pageant fades
To shadows dusk and dun.
We turned in haste, lest clouds and night
Our homeward way should hide
But soon the road was lost in mist
Which clothed the mountain side.
And shelving rocks supplied no hold
But tufts of yielding grass.
The moss-grown ledges at their feet
Led into deep morass.
The darkness grew ; we called aloud
And paused : a startled sheep
Leapt up, and sent the loosened stones
Bounding from steep to steep.

Again we called ; an answering voice
 Came faintly through the fog.
 " Come back," it cried, " no road is there
 But crags and treacherous bog."
 Next moment at our feet we heard
 A sheep dog's muttered bark,
 And then a lad came suddenly
 Emerging from the dark.
 He saw our danger from afar,
 Before the clouds closed in,
 And came with haste to guide us back
 In safety to our inn.
 Brother, like this is human life,
 As seen from boyhood's height,
 Lit up by hope and fancy's sun
 It seems a landscape bright.
 The traveller descends in haste
 That gorgeous land to tread,
 But finds a thick and drizzling mist
 Envelop him instead.
 Then let him call aloud ; and cease
 Sin's slippery crags to roam
 Good Shepherd ! Thou wilt hear his cry
 And lead the wanderer home.

The next piece shows both his tender devotion
 to our Blessed Lady and his thoughtful study of
 Holy Scripture :

SOLOMON'S MOTHER ¹

" Go forth and see King Solomon in the diadem
 wherewith his Mother crowned him in the day of
 his espousals and in the day of the joy of his heart "
 (Cant. iii. 11).

Come see King Solomon, the glorious youth
 Is seated on his father's throne, his heart

¹ *Cana* in the published volume.

With joy o'erflowing and with gratitude
To Bethsabee, his mother, by whose prayer
He wears the diadem of kingly power.
His mother comes, and rising on his throne
He bows in reverence and the courtiers place
The mother's throne upon her son's right hand.
"One little grace, O King, refuse me not."
"My mother, ask ; for 'tis not meet that I
Should turn away thy face," her son replies.
Such was the filial reverence of the king.

But come behold a monarch greater far
Than Solomon ; at Cana's marriage feast
He sits, and words of grace from off His lips
Fall copiously for all ; when in His ear
A gentle whisper sounds from one whose voice
Had brought Him down to earth, whose voice had
given
For thirty years the law to all His life.
"My son, they have no wine," His mother says,
With thoughtful love for men, with boundless trust
In His Almighty power and loving heart.
"What is there, Woman, between Me and thee ?
Mine hour is not yet come," her Son replies.
Thus Jesus seems to turn away her face.
O mystery ! ¹ "His hour is not yet come !"
Wait, mother, wait until thou see the throne,
That throne of David of which Gabriel told,
The royal cross, whence o'er the hearts of men
Thy Son shall reign in majesty of love.
That is the throne thy prayer hath won for Him
When He took flesh within thy virgin womb.
When He shall sit upon that throne of shame
His heart in love exulting, and shall taste
The vinegar with which they mock His thirst,

¹ The following fourteen lines are not in the published version,
yet are some of the most beautiful he ever wrote.

Then in that nuptial hour, there at His side
 Thy throne of Dolours shall be placed, and then
 Shall He confess thy true maternity,
 And men shall cry "Great Queen of Martyrs,
 Hail ! "

His hour is not yet come ; yet Mary knows
 The hour ne'er came when she could be refused
 And bids the servants wait upon His word.
 Oh ! wiser Thou than Solomon, dear Lord ;
 Thy Mother too more honoured far than his ;
 For Bethsabée soon hid her face in shame,
 When Solomon, indignant at her prayer,
 Despite his royal word, swore speedy death
 Upon the man whose cause she undertook ;
 While Jesus seeming to refuse, does all,
 And more than all, His mother's prayer had asked.

The following lines happily express a saying of
 Brother Giles, one of the holiest of the companions
 of St Francis, often mentioned in the " Fioretti " :—

BROTHER GILES AND THE THEOLOGIAN,
 OR DAILY GRACE

A learned Doctor paced upon the shore,
 St Austin's pages turning o'er and o'er :
 Questions of God's foreknowledge filled his mind
 With restless thoughts and terrors undefined ;
 Till, by his frightened fancies led astray
 From doubt to doubt, he came to blank dismay.
 Just then a simple brother passed along
 And to our Lady sang a joyous song :
 Who when he saw the priest so sore oppressed,
 His song he ceased, and humbly him addressed :
 " You seem unhappy, Father ; may I know
 If in that Latin book you find your woe ?

Forgive me, Father, if I seem too bold,
For pain is oft relieved when it is told."

"Ah! brother," sadly then the priest replied,

"You simple souls have joys to us denied;

You laugh and sing because you ponder not

The mysteries deep of man's eternal lot.

But would you know what question racks my
brains,—

Alas! 'tis this: Who knows what God ordains?"

"Nay, Father, pardon; to my simple mind

You look for comfort where you cannot find.

If you would seek refreshment from the heat

The ocean rolls its waters to your feet.

Why strain your eyes across the boundless plain?

Why to the distant billows cry in vain:

'In central ocean lies a hidden cave

Bring thence the brine my weary feet to lave?'

So is God's gracious Providence outspread

With depths unfathomed by the pilot's lead.

Yet why repine? Enough if we explore

The ebb and flow upon the neighbouring shore.

The tide of daily grace brings daily joy,

Why, seeking further, present peace destroy?"

The Doctor paused in thought, but paused not long.

Then joined the brother in his joyous song.

The following short pieces require no further
word of introduction:—

A TRIFLE

"Quod minimum est minimum est, sed in minimo
fidelem esse magnum est" (S. Aug. De doct. Christ.
Lib. iv. cap. xviii. n. 35. E.).

Though trifles, given when God inspires,
Will trifles still remain,

The giving is no trifling thing,
And costs no trifling pain.

Yet choicest grace by him is lost,
Who trifles fears to lose ;
For he thinks triflingly of God
Who trifles dares refuse.

God's tend'rest love is their reward
Who hear His tend'rest call.
He gives Himself without reserve
To those who give Him *all*.

ST JOSEPH OR ST JOSEPH'S ASS—WHICH ?

St Joseph, through the desert wild,
Supports the Virgin and her Child,
Who ride upon a lowly ass,
While Angels worship as they pass.

But Joseph's ass through all that throng
Of Angels slowly plods along,
And wonders men should lay such loads
For beasts to bear on sandy roads.

Like Joseph holy priests delight
To wait on Jesus day and night,
Nor e'er grow weary of the road
While paying homage to their God.

Not so the tepid worldly priest,
For he, like Joseph's sluggish beast,
Bemoans the load of priestly care,
Which Angel hosts would proudly bear.

THROWN AWAY

"Waste not the ointment," Judas cried,
 "Upon the Master's head ;
 Go, sell it for three hundred pence
 To feed the poor with bread."
 "Waste not your soul," the world repeats,
 "In contemplations vain ;
 Go teach the ignorant and poor,
 Or soothe the sufferer's pain."
 The cheats ! what care they for the poor
 Who sell their God for pay ;
 But whatsoe'er their clutch escapes
 They count it *thrown away*.

"WASTE"

With sordid heart at Mary's waste
 The wily Judas sneers ;
 Till Christ with pledge of endless fame
 Her loving spirit cheers.
 With gentler accents Martha pleads
 Against her sister's rest ;
 But Christ extols the better choice,
 Which none shall e'er molest.
 Then, Mary, heed not, since from Christ
 Thy praises thou hast heard ;
 Waste, waste thy ointment on His head,
 Thy soul upon His word.

NEAR TO AND FAR OFF

Near to the rich man's door, from day to day
 Poor Lazarus in rags and ulcers lay ;

There placed by God to stir that bloated soul
 To faith and charity and self-control.
 In vain ; neglected and despised he lay
 The rich man's nuisance in the public way.
 Death changes all. The rich man beggar turned
 In vain asks pity from the saint he spurned.
 In vain ; for now far off their lots are cast,
 A gulf divides them never to be passed.
 And lies there not near to our daily path
 A Heavenly Beggar, object of our Faith ?
 His Sacramental garments scarce conceal
 The bleeding wounds that to our heart appeal.
 Appeal too oft in vain ; men thrust aside
 The unwelcome suppliant from their path of pride.
 The day may come when they, with fearful start,
 Shall hear from His majestic lips, " Depart ;
 Depart ye cursed into quenchless fire,
 Where mercy tempers not My vengeful ire."
 Then shall they moan when there is none to hear,
 Far off from Him whom once they thought too
 near.

For several years, especially towards the end of
 his life, Father Bridgett suffered from sleeplessness,
 and it was during the wakeful hours of the night
 that he found relief in the framing of epigrams.
 They are nearly always of a religious tone.

ARCHIMEDES' FULCRUM

" Give me a resting-point beyond earth's sphere,
 And from its place earth's mighty bulk I'll rear " :
 What Archimedes asked, to thee is given,
 O Christian priest, to lift the world to heaven.
 That spot unearthly is Christ's altar-stone ;
 Place there thy lever—men thy power will own.

EPITAPH FOR A CHRISTIAN

Mock not the dead with idle lays
 Nor with vain flattery on my tomb,
 Since Truth Himself has spoke my praise,
 Or fixed my everlasting doom.
 You know not which, yet O ! my friend
 Your knee in hopeful pity bend.

EARTH-WORMS ¹

“ Of Jesus science treats not, yea or nay ” :
 So writes the honoured teacher of our day.
 Yet pause a while, these ancient words to scan :
 “ We saw His form—a worm and not a man.”
 If for our God your science has no terms,
 Give Him at least—a place among your worms.

NO REVELATION

Happier the earthworm, mute and deaf and blind,
 Stretching its slimy length a leaf to find,
 Than those who watch its progress through the sod,
 Yet stretch no listening, loving soul to God.

Father Bridgett had a strong objection to the habit of taking snuff. After a sleepless night he came down, and amused his companions with the following :—

¹ In a letter to a young German, Baron Mengden, published in *The Academy* 4th November 1882, Darwin writes that he does not believe that a Revelation ever was given ; that science has nothing to do with Jesus Christ ; and that, as regards the immortality of the soul, each man must judge “ for himself between conflicting vague probabilities.” He adds that he cannot spare the time to treat the matter fully.

A SNUFFY RELIGIOUS

On costly dust each year the poor man spent
 An orphan's pension or a widow's rent,
 To dye his handkerchiefs a dirty brown
 And make his nose a dust-bin upside down.

When his companions quoted St Alphonsus' custom, one of whose snuff-boxes is still preserved at Pagani, Father Bridgett, with amusing perversity, would maintain that it was the box in which the Saint kept his powdered bitter herbs, with which he used to render disagreeable the food he took.

SPECULATION

"Heu ! malumus, semper quærendo per *cognitionem*, nunquam invenire quod quærimus, quam *amando* possidere id, quod non amatum, frustra etiam inveniretur."—PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.

As children rove through field and grove
 With healthy circulation ;
 While doctor's blood runs slow as mud
 Through health's investigation :—

As cragsmen leap the dizzy steep
 By laws of gravitation ;
 While students hale grow wan and pale
 To find their explanation :—

So peasants rise and scale the skies ;—
 Much love and little thinking !
 While we, with store of learned lore,
 In apathy are sinking.

Were souls machines, which moved by means
 Of complicated motions ;
 We might expect some grand effect
 From all our learned notions.

But toes and heels, not springs and wheels
 Teach man the art of walking,
 And faith and love his spirit move,
 Not scientific talking.

Though Newton found why worlds go round,
 And pears and apple tumble ;
 Boys light of pate walk firm and straight,
 While Newtons limp and stumble.

So simple prayer, with scanty fare,
 Of old made souls athletic ;
 While ours grow weak, in bodies sleek,
 And libraries ascetic.

If, moved by fear, we drop a tear,
 We analyse it after ;
 And if we smile, we stop awhile,
 And analyse our laughter.

We rather choose our pains to lose,
 Our eyes with study blinding ;
 Than loving find what, by the mind
 Unloved, were not worth finding.

The following lines, not his own, but made in a manner his by his application of them, were found among his papers with the following heading :—
 “ Words not written of the rosary, but most applicable ” :—

A song as simple as the sky ;
 Monotonous as the sea ;
Recurrent as the flowers that die,
 And rise again in glee.

A melody that childhood sings
 Without a thought of art ;
Drawn from the few familiar strings,
 The fibres of the heart.

CHAPTER X

CHARACTERISTICS

EVERY gracious life that has been spent upon earth is a distinct gift from God to men. Its edifying example is like wholesome nourishment to their souls. Were the present writer capable of doing his office worthily, he feels that he would have been providing his readers with a spiritual banquet. In this chapter he will strive to fulfil Our Lord's command to His disciples: "Gather up the fragments, lest they be lost." There are many little traits needed to complete the picture we have endeavoured to draw which we will strive to gather together, and which, not finding a place under the special headings of other chapters, might otherwise be lost.

It will be remembered that, when speaking of Father Bridgett's self-control as a controversialist, it was mentioned that naturally he was hot-tempered. In addition to this, we have to bear in mind the trying nature of his maladies. In his youth, as we have seen, he was very active: described by his former school companion as "one who could do everything; one of the best at all games; a wonderful swimmer." We can understand what a trial it was to him to find himself gradually developing that excessive corpulence, with various trying ailments, and, during the last ten years or more of his life,

a tendency to dropsy in his legs and feet. To make his younger companions understand how great a trial to him was his corpulence—a family heritage—he used, half in joke, half in earnest, to say to them : “ If you want to know my state, fasten a port-manteau in front of you and another behind, and a well-filled bag on each side, and then try to walk. You will then know a little of what I feel always.”

Added to this, his nervous system became more and more susceptible, so that noise which others would not notice would become to him almost intolerable. The writer was his companion at almost the last regular Mission Father Bridgett gave. It was in February 1892. He was then in such a state from dropsy that, but for a system of bandaging which had been recommended to him almost by chance, he would not have been able to walk at all. As on Mission he had no lay-brother to attend him, he was dependent for this service on his companion, who well remembers his first attempt. Poor Father Bridgett lay on his bed with his feet extended, with the two bandages carefully prepared in separate rolls. The bandaging had to begin from the under part of the foot, and go over the instep, and so on to near the knee. On this occasion, by some happy chance, his companion managed it to Father Bridgett’s perfect satisfaction—neither too tight nor too loose ; and when the second roll had been adjusted he said, with a pleasant smile : “ That’s splendid ! You have risen to be Master of the Rolls at one step.”

Certainly nothing, as a rule, could have been more

edifying than Father Bridgett's patience and resignation to God's Will in his many sufferings. Still, there is no doubt that one of the trials God sent him was a liability to frequent temptations to irritability, which he was not always successful in perfectly controlling. It was, perhaps, specially when Superior that he was subject to bursts of indignation. This is mentioned not merely to give a faithful picture of Father Bridgett, but because this failing served to bring out one of the most beautiful features of his character—namely, his generosity in making reparation if he felt he had gone too far. In this some may trace a likeness to the natural character of Blessed Clement Hofbauer. There is, however, one to whose character Father Bridgett's bore a striking resemblance—the great Dr Johnson. All will remember that remarkable instance of Johnson's spirit of reparation, when he went to the market-place of Uttoxeter, and stood bareheaded in the rain for a considerable time, enduring the scoffs and ridicule of the bystanders, in order to make reparation for some disobedience and disrespect to his father in his young days. How often indeed do we not feel that Dr Johnson would have made a splendid Catholic when we read instance after instance in which his earnest spirit of religion, united to his strong common-sense, made him do and say things which were distinctly Catholic!

When Father Bridgett was Rector at Limerick he gave proof of this spirit of reparation. He was kneeling at the sacristy door, which was a convenient place for hearing Mass at the High Altar. A Father

went out to say Mass, and when he reached the steps of the Altar, and was about to genuflect, the paten slipped from the top of the chalice, and carried everything with it. He thus found himself holding merely the empty chalice in his hand—all the rest was on the ground before him. Father Bridgett, who witnessed it, had never seen such a thing happen before; and, considering it was sheer carelessness on the part of the Father, he took the first opportunity to give him a severe reprimand. The poor Father, seeing his Superior's indignation, thought he was justified in attempting to make some excuse by saying that the paten in question did not fit the chalice properly; but Father Bridgett would listen to no excuse. Strange to say, the very next morning Father Bridgett said Mass at the High Altar with the same unfortunate chalice, and when he reached the Altar-steps, and was about to genuflect, the very same accident happened to him; and there he stood, with nothing but the empty chalice in his hand, gazing in mingled shame and astonishment at the veil and pall and purificator and paten and Altar-bread strewn on the steps before him. He gathered them up as best he could with the help of his server, and ascending the Altar-steps prepared for his Mass, which he offered in dispositions we can understand from his subsequent conduct. For he took the first opportunity, when all the Community were gathered together, to make the most generous amends to the Father whom he had rebuked. He condemned himself in the strongest terms for false zeal and unjust severity, and said he

looked upon what had happened to himself as a punishment from God. We can well imagine the edification which the humility he then manifested gave to the whole Community.

This same spirit made him, when his last term of office as Rector at Limerick was drawing to a close, address his Community, and say, when commending their fervour in observing their rule, that he did not think there was anyone who was giving disedification in the Community except himself. He said this because by that time his many maladies were asserting themselves, and he was always tormented with the fear, especially when Superior, that he was unduly giving in to them. He was Rector of St Joseph's House of Studies at Teignmouth in 1893-94. This was within five years of his death. His maladies were then of a nature to have excused him, in the opinion of all who knew him, from many points of regular observance, but, being made Superior against his will or expectation, he never could reconcile himself to this state of things. He could not but fear that his great size, his large full countenance, which showed no sign of sickness or suffering, combined with his bright spirits, often manifested in presence of others, especially the young, might make many of the students, who numbered between thirty and forty, disbelieve in his inability to keep the Rule. The Father who was at that time in immediate charge of the students as Prefect would find to his surprise that the Rector, without saying a word to anyone (doubtless fearing to be dissuaded), would gather the

students together in their Common Room, and there in the humblest manner accuse himself of slothfulness in keeping the Rule, and beg them not to take scandal by him, but to pray for him, and he would then most earnestly promise amendment. The result would be that, to the surprise of all, the Rector would be in his place next morning at meditation; and this would continue for a few days, and then his maladies would assert themselves again. This characteristic came out very strongly, and in the most edifying manner, in his last sickness.

Another glimpse of his interior life is given by the resolutions he made in one of his annual Retreats when he was Rector of Clapham in 1872. He wrote them down, but afterwards carefully erased parts, and prefaced what he has left with these words :

Should anyone by chance or otherwise read any resolution here recorded, let him not think that I kept such resolution, but only that I knew my duty, and that if I did not perform it Jesus Christ, my Judge, will chastise me with many stripes.

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

For those who are not familiar with the life of St Alphonsus it should be recorded that the Abbot Muscari, mentioned by Father Bridgett in this paper, was a Basilian Abbot of great learning, and great influence in Rome. He was so much struck with St Alphonsus and the Congregation that he insisted on offering himself to become a member.

The Saint hesitated, doubting the prudence of receiving him, but in the end felt obliged to yield.

The Father Abbot, as he was called, went on well for some time, and was given the charge of the students. After a while he began to give way to pride and disobedience, and gave the Saint, who treated him with the utmost patience and kindness, great anxiety and annoyance. Finally, he conceived the wicked design of ruining the Congregation, and drawing all the students away to found a new one of his own. Almighty God frustrated his plot. This will make us realise the meaning of Father Bridgett's words.

"I conjure you," says St Alphonsus to the Abbot Muscari, "do not injure our poor Congregation. It would be an outrage to Jesus Christ Himself. No one knows better than you that all we have is the suffering and fatigue to which we sacrifice ourselves for Jesus Christ and for the poor."

Let me take this exhortation as addressed to myself—not that I intend to injure the Congregation like that traitor, but that I injure it by my pride and sensuality and neglect of my charge.

Muscari had been a benefactor to the Congregation. He had conferred an honour in entering; he had not received much from it. But I have received *everything*, and have given back little or nothing. He had just entered; I have been nurtured in its bosom these two and twenty years. Hence if I *injure the Congregation* I shall deserve a greater indignation than Muscari.

A man was lying by the roadside wounded and half dead. The Good Samaritan succoured him, as we read in the Gospel. We do not read in the Gospel that this man afterwards injured the Good Samaritan either by robbing or striking him, or in any other way. Had he done so his name

would be an execration. Well ! the Congregation has been that Good Samaritan to me. I well remember what I was when I was received, and how my wounds were bound up, and the oil of gentleness and the wine of correction ; and the new life that came to my limbs. Well ! shall I now injure the Congregation by my scandals ? If so . . .

Besides, I not only fill an important office, but keep someone else from filling it. The barren fig-tree not only produces no fruit, but cumber valuable ground where a profitable tree might stand. Another Rector might give good conferences, might animate and console by his words, might edify by his example, might draw down graces by his prayers. . . . If I keep him out I at least must supply his place.

“ Have we come into the Congregation to lead an easy and comfortable life ? If so, we should have done better to remain in our families ” (St Alphonsus, Circular of 27th August 1765). A merchant “ sold all ” to buy a pearl of great price. When the pearl was offered to him he wanted one of less value ! And then he took the pearl, and spoilt it ! This merchant is the Religious who enters religion to gain perfection, and then will only have imperfection. He rejects admonitions and corrections, and violates the rules ! He seeks poverty, and then wants comforts ! He seeks subjection, and then wants liberty ! He seeks a rule, and loves dispensations ! “ *God favours obedience, not taste,* ” said St Alphonsus to a student who wished for other direction than that appointed by the rule (Letter 112). This applies to work as well as direction. Yet in *literary* work St Alphonsus as Superior paid consideration to the taste of Father Alexander de Meo. “ I wish, ” he writes (Letter 137), “ that when there are no Missions he would not lose sight of friend Basnage. He would do a work

which would be applauded by the whole Church. But I fear he has no taste for that." And three weeks later: "I should wish to know why Father Alexander has no taste to write against Basnage. It would be a glorious work if it were well done."

It seems to me that in such a case a subject should make known his tastes, and then work by obedience, regardless of them. I resolve to do this. I have written one book. It was my own suggestion, though done by permission. Had that permission not been granted I certainly would not have importuned for it.

Some other books are in my head:

1. Mary in the Epistles.¹ The notes are ready.
2. "Fermented liquors": their use, abuse, and disuse from Scripture and Tradition. Also notes ready.
3. The Acts of the Apostles and the history of the Church illustrating each other.
4. Judgments of *Saints* on human events—*i.e.* as we have no inspired history of the Church as we have of the Jews we may have the nearest approach to it in judgments passed by canonised Saints.
5. The *New Testament* prophecies fulfilled in the Catholic Church alone. The Prophecy and the fulfilment would mutually prove each other.
6. The hidden life of Jesus Christ.
7. Pithy sayings of St Alphonsus.

But Father Provincial evidently would like me to try to write a life of our Holy Founder. I feel some repugnance to this for these reasons—(a) I do not find in myself any talent for *narration*, though I am very fond of investigation; (b) I have some natural fear of *domestic* criticism; (c) I have a still greater fear of misjudging so supernatural a man from my being an Englishman, a convert, and a very *natural* man—for though I love and

¹ This was afterwards brought out by Father Livius, C.S.S.R. (Burns & Oates), to whom Father Bridgett must have handed over his notes.

admire the Saint I do find myself out of harmony with him in many points; (*d*) but, above all, because I am so imperfect and even scandalous a Redemptorist. Can a Father who has given so much disedification be set to write the life of his Founder? Would not the mere attempt, independently of the manner of fulfilment, cause murmurs, and justly so? Could someone else write the life I would cheerfully assist in the materials.

What characterised St Alphonsus was his activity and his vow never to lose time. My prevailing vice is indolence in general, but that kind especially which consists in *aliud agendo*—doing everything at the wrong time.¹ The effects of this on my whole life are most disastrous. The personal faults it has caused, the ruin of piety, the neglect of duty, the scandals, are innumerable. Resolutions to take consist merely in this one word: to obey the rule, follow the order of the day, and in all free time to do that which is of obligation. But how bring a lazy man to do this? The three things that occur to me are reflection, prayer, and examination.

(1) *Reflection*. Spiritual reading from the constitutions or from letters of St Alphonsus. I will make my meditation frequently on Idleness, Zeal for souls, Merit, Shortness of time, Loss of time, Responsibility, Judgment, Scandal, etc.

(2) *Prayer*. Besides asking the grace to overcome indolence in meditation it shall be the explicit intention of each rosary, before each Mass, and in thanksgiving, and in visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and this thought to occupy my mind in the Little Hours, at the *judicia, justificationes*, etc., so often repeated.

¹ These self-reproaches refer to faults against the ordinary routine of Community life, which did not interfere with his remarkable diligence in study.

(3) *Examination.* This will be the subject till next great Retreat, and that it may be made I will keep record in a book, which I will make up each night, or immediately after breakfast when I go to my room.

Rosary to be said after breakfast.

Visit and Vespers at 2.30.

Try to have letters written before dinner.

Account of conscience of brothers early in month, of fathers on day of their Retreat, in morning if possible.

My own confession on Tuesday. My own Retreat on the first Tuesday in the month if possible.

I will always examine myself on this head for my confession.

Penance for rising later than the community—dry bread at breakfast and bitter herbs before going to bed.”¹

¹ We have the testimony of Father Bridgett's Superiors to the fact that, when he was first made Rector and his health was good, he was most edifying in the way in which he kept the Rule. Several can bear testimony to the affection and confidence he inspired into the younger members of his Community as well as to the permanent influence for good which he exercised over them. As to Father Bridgett's expressions of self-condemnation, we must bear in mind what the Saints have said of themselves. God gave them a twofold light, which revealed on the one hand the Sanctity of God and on the other their own misery and sinfulness. This made St Paul say he was the chief of sinners even when God had declared him a vessel of election; and it made the seraphic St Francis say he was the greatest sinner on the earth. If any of us had listened to St Teresa's own account of herself we should have considered her a very imperfect soul, to say the least; yet she is believed never to have lost her baptismal innocence and to have been one of the greatest of God's Saints. Now, we do not claim that Father Bridgett was a Saint, but we do claim for him a large share in the very saintly virtue of a truly humble, penitential spirit founded on deep self-knowledge. As to the small self-imposed penances, they are of the kind that are traditional in most Religious Communities. If anyone doubts their efficacy as a stimulant to virtue let him try them, but try them honestly.

No one who understands anything of the spiritual life will be able to read this without edification ; no Religious, and especially no Superior, without profit. Would that we could all work with a like energy and perseverance at overcoming our daily faults ! It is often said that Almighty God allows certain external faults in persons, who are really holy, for their humiliation. Father Bridgett seems to have been one of these.

We have already said that in company of others, and especially with the young, his spirits would at times be very bright.

He was sometimes very quick in repartee. He was once at a meeting of clergy at Limerick in the days of Bishop Butler. The Bishop was presiding. It happened that his two Vicars-General were named Fitzgerald and Browne. Some question turned up connected with English misrule in Ireland. The Bishop being fond of a joke, and wishing to poke a little fun at Father Bridgett, said before all the clergy : “ What do you think of that, Father Bridgett ? ” Father Bridgett answered : “ Well, my lord, I never heard that Ireland suffered anything from the Bridgetts, but, as far as my reading of history goes, I fear that considerable mischief came from the Butlers, the Fitzgeralds, and the Brownes.” There was a general laugh, in which the Bishop and his Vicars joined.

He could make a joke at his own expense—often, as we have seen in his letters, jesting about the corpulence that was such a trial to him. He was once going out at Clapham with a young Father

(Castle), whose thin spare figure was just the one to set off Father Bridgett's personal peculiarities. It was Father Bridgett's delight to get on to the top of a tramcar, to enjoy the air. Most of the trams from Clapham pass by the Elephant and Castle, the famous public-house in South London. When Father Bridgett had settled down his elephantine figure by the side of his companion he looked at him, and said: "Here we are, the Elephant and Castle!"

He entered with zest into Community amusements, and delighted to arrange all the details of an excursion, and this even when he had become unable to take any part in them. As long as he was able, it was his delight to act as cicerone to any friend who needed to be shown over some of the sights of London, and no better or more interesting guide could be desired. It was on one such occasion that he had Mr Denis Florence McCarthy, the poet, with some other friends for his companions. As they sat, as usual, on the top of the omnibus, which had been chartered for the occasion, they passed a Dissenting Chapel, which had a public-house next door to it on each side. Mr McCarthy pointed it out, remarking that they were curious supporters for a chapel. Father Bridgett smiled, and said: "I suppose there is a very dry preacher."

He had great diligence in study, and one day he said to a companion who complained that he could get no considerable time free for it: "If I were to wait for some considerable free time I should never study at all: my study consists in utilising the

scraps of time I find between one occupation and another." On another occasion he said that he believed, were he to write the ways and means by which he compiled "Our Lady's Dowry," it would, indeed, be a curious book. The same might be said with regard to his "History of the Blessed Eucharist." As long as health allowed him to engage in active work he was ever profiting by every moment of spare time to collect and arrange matter for his various works. He in this proved himself a worthy son of his holy Father St Alphonsus, who, in the midst of the work of his diocese, and in spite of his severe illnesses, composed his many works by never losing the spare moments at his disposal. The Saint, indeed, had bound himself by vow never to lose a moment of time.

The following extract from a letter of the Rev. Father Pollen, S.J., bears upon this subject:—

Father Morris had the highest regard for Father Bridgett's work. I remember the first time I saw him here. He came to get the clue to some MS. at the British Museum. He went on there, and came back again in the evening with his notes, which I think I still have. I remember well the admiration with which Father Morris spoke to me (after the *padre* had gone) about the diligence and grasp of the matter which the notes displayed. In one day he had taken the precise measure of the whole codex.

In this matter of diligence Father Bridgett has been compared to Venerable Bede, who continued his studies and lectures, not only when confined to his bed by illness, but even dictated to his disciples

from his deathbed. So was it with Father Bridgett. Cardinal Vaughan, at one of his many visits to him during his last sickness, finding his mind so clear, asked his opinion on the subjects for the decoration in mosaics of certain chapels in the Westminster Cathedral. A carefully considered scheme resulted, and was completed only just before the end came, so that it was published in *The Tablet* simultaneously with the account of his death.

Father Bridgett, besides his appreciation of art, was himself able to draw with considerable skill. A Father went into his room when he was Rector at Teignmouth, and was preparing for his science class. He wished to exemplify the amount of expression there is in the mouth, and wished to enlarge the illustration in the book. The enlargement was lying on the table before him, beautifully drawn. The Father asked him who had done it, thinking it was one of the students, but, to his surprise, Father Bridgett answered that he had done it himself.

His calm judgment made Father Bridgett a model counsellor. Indeed, his Superiors so recognised this that, from the earliest years after his ordination, he was constantly consultor to the Provincial or to the Rector of his House, except during the years that he was himself Rector in Limerick and Teignmouth. In consultation, just as when writing, the Spirit of God seemed to rest upon him in a special manner. There was no hurry or excitement ; he was ready to listen to the opinions of others, to weigh every argument, and then would clearly and quietly express his own opinion. Nor

was it only in his official capacity, and when consulted by his Superiors, that he would so act, but he was ever at the service of his brethren, whether Fathers or lay-brothers. One of his companions, who had been accustomed to have recourse to him in difficulties, relates that, a few days after the Father's death, a case of difficulty having arisen, the thought came naturally into his mind that he would like to have Father Bridgett's opinion upon it, but it was followed instantly by the sad reflection: Alas! it is no longer possible.

The last characteristic we will mention is his sincerity and love of truth. It was that which led him through all the trials and dangers which surrounded his boyhood and youth, and finally brought him, in spite of all sacrifices, into the bosom of the True Church. It is that which shines forth in all his writings, and made him one of our most trusted leaders. His honesty as a historian was so well known that it is to be doubted if anyone ever accused him of a *suppressio veri*, except Anthony Froude. One who was with him when Father Bridgett was told of the accusation said he would never forget the quiet self-possession Father Bridgett manifested. There was no burst of indignation, nor sarcastic retort at the expense of the character, as regards literary honesty, of his accuser, but he simply said, in a tone that would have brought conviction to anyone who might before have doubted: "That is a thing I *never* did."

It was Father Bridgett's love of truth, as well as his charity, which made him ever on the alert to

ward off misconceptions likely to reflect on the character of another, and which made him, but a month before his last sickness, send the following lines to his old friend Father Russell, editor of *The Irish Monthly* :—

At p. 566 of your September number, after mentioning Father Newman's "Loss and Gain," you remark: "By the way, is it not strange that this grand and austere genius should throw his thoughts and feelings into this peculiar form, at so solemn a crisis of his history?" I think I can throw some light on this matter. Newman was received into the Church in October 1845. His essay on Development immediately appeared. Men wondered what he would do as a Catholic, and were not a little surprised that his first English work, the preface of which is dated February 1848, should be a work of fiction, parts of which are in a light or sarcastic vein. What a falling off, they said. Is this the writer of the parochial sermons? And they were scandalised. I was present at a conversation between Provost Manning, afterwards Cardinal, and Father Coffin, afterwards Bishop of Southwark. Father Coffin mentioned the delight with which he was accustomed to read over and over again "Loss and Gain." Provost Manning replied that he had only once read it, and had been pained by it, and never could understand how Newman could have condescended to such a work. Father Coffin then said that Father Newman had undertaken it as a work of charity. When Mr James Burns, who had a nice business as a publisher of Tractarian books, became a Catholic he lost his Anglican connection, and had, of course, much difficulty in starting as a Catholic publisher. Father Newman wrote "Loss and Gain" to give him a

start ; not so much by the profits of the book itself as by the advertisement of his publishing house, for it was an open secret that the book was by Newman, though his name was not on the title-page. Father Coffin had every means of knowing the facts, since he was living with Father Newman in Rome while the book was being written. I remember this explanation changed Manning's opinion, which was a mere survival of Protestant prejudice. I do not know if the circumstances of Mr Burns had anything to do with the choice of a title. It was as applicable to him as to the hero, Charles Reding, or to other converts.¹

¹ Some doubt having been thrown on the correctness of this account, it was confirmed by the Very Rev. Father Ryder, then Superior of the Birmingham Oratory, who said that he had often heard the story from Father St John, Newman's great friend, and his companion in Rome.



REDEMPTORIST HOUSE, CLAPHAM

WHERE FATHER BRIDGETT DIED

(View from the garden, with the spire of St Mary's rising behind the House)

Facing p. 219

CHAPTER XI

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints" (Ps. cxv. 6).

For many years Father Bridgett had suffered much, and yet had struggled bravely against his complication of maladies. But in October 1898 he grew decidedly worse, though not so much so as to excite special alarm. It was only when a serious attack of hemorrhage came on that the doctor's suspicions as to his real condition were aroused. A specialist was called in, and he was then declared to be suffering from internal cancer. Any attempt to remove it by an operation was out of the question, and all knew that, humanly speaking, death was now only a question of time. Father Bridgett received the news with perfect composure and resignation to God's will; at the same time, as he never had had any very great confidence in physicians, he could not help thinking they might be mistaken. It was, indeed, a very considerable time before he thoroughly realised that they were right.

As he was in danger of a return of the hemorrhage, which might have proved fatal, it was considered advisable to administer Extreme Unction. This was done on Friday, October 14, the eve of the

Feast of St Teresa, which was the anniversary of his profession forty-seven years before. The immediate danger from the hemorrhage passed away, and Father Bridgett was able during the next week to rise, and even to leave his room. The next Sunday was October 23, the Feast of the Commemoration of the Most Holy Redeemer, and the fiftieth anniversary of the coming of the Redemptorist Fathers to Clapham. It had been arranged that this event should be solemnly celebrated by a Triduum with High Mass and special sermons during the course of the following year; and Father Bridgett, who took the greatest interest in it, had drawn out a scheme for the subjects of the various sermons. As the next Sunday was the actual anniversary, Father Bridgett asked to be allowed to preach at the High Mass. He seemed to have revived so wonderfully after his anointing, and protested so strongly that he felt equal to preaching, that no one had the heart to oppose him. One who was present thus wrote of the sermon:

It was a beautiful sermon—a kind of retrospect of the work of the last fifty years for God by the Fathers in Clapham. Many were in tears. He read it—but so well, and with so clear and strong a voice, that but for seeing the manuscript in his hand one would not have known that he was reading.

It was his last sermon—the last of a long series preached from that pulpit. It was truly his farewell to those faithful people of Clapham for whom he had laboured so many years, and for whom, had God so willed, he would have gladly laboured still.

Before long the terrible disease asserted itself once more, and Father Bridgett was confined to his room, and for the most part to his bed. His state was soon such as to render his receiving many visitors impossible. His nephew, Mr William Bridgett, though living at a considerable distance, was most devoted in coming to see him, and his visits gave the greatest pleasure. Nothing could exceed the kindness shown to Father Bridgett by Cardinal Vaughan. During one of his Eminence's visits the Rector came into the room, and the Cardinal turning to him, said: "I have just been telling Father Bridgett that when he reaches heaven our Blessed Lady will salute him with a profound bow." This, of course, referred to all Father Bridgett had written in honour of our Lady. Still, however well deserved, it was "mighty eulogy," to borrow Father Bridgett's own expression. Many would have scarcely known what answer to make in return, but Father Bridgett at once adroitly turned the conversation by saying that the Cardinal's words reminded him of what a French priest once wrote to him. He had been reading Father Bridgett's "Life of Blessed Thomas More," and was delighted with it. And in his letter he said: "When you die, and reach heaven, Blessed Thomas will cry out: 'Meg, Meg, here is Father Bridgett.' " It is a pretty story, and exactly expresses the effect of the "Life," which makes us feel we know the Saint and his family personally.

Father Bridgett's devotion to our Lady, and his labours to promote true devotion to her among his

fellow-countrymen, to which the Cardinal had made so striking a reference, would lead us to expect that that Blessed Mother would obtain for him some exceptional grace, above all in the hour of death. We are not, therefore, surprised when we hear that many very special graces were bestowed on him, so that his death appeared to those who watched and assisted him during that long sickness one of the most blessed they had ever witnessed.

He was granted a very vivid light of Faith. It seemed to him that he realised the truths of Faith as he had never done before. He expressed his great gratitude to God for His goodness in this respect ; for he well knew the terrible trial of temptations against the Faith, having often had to deal with poor souls that suffered from them, and his own keen intellect enabled him to appreciate difficulties at their full strength. Yet now his mind seemed full of light ; nay, it seemed to him as if Our Lord were constantly present with him, inviting him to follow Him, as He invited St Peter to come to Him upon the waters. Thus for some five or six weeks his soul was filled with great spiritual joy, and he longed to die. He often said that he did not ask to be saved a single pain, but earnestly begged for prayers that he might have the grace to bear his cross and die as a worthy son of St Alphonsus. Thus did God not only reward him for his faithful service in the past, but strengthen him for those still greater sufferings both of soul and body which were in store for him.

All were, of course, anxious that a life so valuable

should, if possible, be preserved. This, however, could only be by a miracle. Many pressed him to ask for this, and to join in a Novena in honour of the English Martyrs lately Beatified, with the intention that, if the cure were granted, the miracle should be used for the cause of their canonisation. At first his humility, which made him feel he was unworthy of such a favour, together with his great desire to die, prompted him to refuse. Later, however, when death, which had appeared so near, seemed to be still far off, and an indefinite period of fearful suffering was apparently settling down upon him, other motives began to assert themselves. He began to fear lest he might be resisting God's will, and putting an obstacle to His glory, and that of those holy Martyrs, to whose cause he had ever been devoted, and he gave his consent. He thus expresses himself in a letter to the Very Reverend Father Magnier in Rome :

This is not for my sake, for I would rather wish to die, but for God's glory, and that of His holy Martyrs. It is not for alleviation of suffering, but for a cure, so as to be evident. In beginning these devotions I shall, of course, promise God to be a more fervent Religious, and also (in particular) to begin at once to write the Life of St Alphonsus.

From these last words we see how great was his desire to make up for the long hesitation, which, alas ! was the real cause of his never writing the Life of his holy Father and Founder. At the end of the Novena he was no better, but rather worse, and it was evident to all that it was not God's will that

he should be cured. He was unable to write with his own hand ; but in another letter to the same Father in Rome, he says :

I am thanking you for your most interesting and consoling letter of the 8th, by the pen of Brother James. Father Provincial has brought me your letter of the 17th. I am very grateful to you, to His Paternity, and to all *confrères* for their prayers and great charity. As yet it has not pleased God to grant the favour we have asked. Perhaps I am unworthy to be the instrument of the glorification of our Martyrs, or, perhaps, it may be that it is better for me to die soon. I have been much worse during the Novena, so that I have never heard Holy Mass,¹ and only once received Viaticum, and I am now quite unable to write myself. I need not enter into details.

On receiving the blessing of our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., he wrote, full of gratitude, to the same Father :

I have much peace and confidence ; but temptations of many kinds may be before me, so I trust very earnestly in your prayers. I wrote this morning to His Paternity. Let me thank yourself for obtaining me the precious Apostolic Blessing. Thank most earnestly all dear *confrères*. I am greatly touched by their charity.

He adds in reference to one of our Fathers, who had just died in Limerick, after giving an example of wonderful patience :

¹ The Holy Mass was said in the Infirmary when Father Bridgett was sufficiently well to hear it.

We have just heard that our dear, patient Father Healy is at last arrived safe in port. God be praised ! His sufferings were awful, but, no doubt, have done their work.

As has been already noticed, the humble spirit of penance, for which Father Bridgett had ever been remarkable, showed itself more conspicuously than ever in his last sickness. All that he had ever recommended to others in Missions or Retreats regarding sorrow for past sin he determined to put in practice to the full. Several times in the week would he ask some priest to hear his confession. It was impossible to witness unmoved his deep humility and contrition for what the world, doubtless, would not consider sins at all. It is related that one day someone entered the sick-room by mistake just as Father Bridgett had finished his confession to his ordinary confessor, and he found both penitent and confessor in floods of tears. It had evidently been impossible for the confessor to prevent himself being completely overcome with emotion when he beheld that holy old man, in his humility, utterly forgetting all he had done for God, and lamenting with bitter tears over his past sins, as though he were some poor penitent just returned to God.¹ It was this that made the

¹ This reminds us of what is related of St Augustine of Hippo when on his deathbed. His biographer, Possidius, thus writes : " He used to say to us in familiar conversation that no baptised Christian, though ever so holy, or even a priest, ought to quit this life without suitable and competent penance ; and this he accomplished himself in his last illness. For he ordered the Psalms of David, on penance, to be transcribed and hung around his bed ; and he read them constantly with abundant tears."

Provincial, the Very Rev. Father Bennett, say in a letter written to Rome, dated February 17, 1899, the very day of his death :

Father Bridgett is sinking fast. You may have a telegram from me at any time now. I never saw any of our dear *confrères* die a more beautiful death. I think it the most beautiful I have ever seen. At any rate, it is more like the death I would choose than any other I have assisted at, because there is more of the spirit of penance and less exultation. Father Bridgett is *full* of sorrow for all his failings towards God, yet full of childlike confidence in his Father's mercy and love. His devotion to Our Lady and St Alphonsus is magnificent.

These words of the Provincial bring us to the third great grace bestowed on Father Bridgett in his last sickness—namely, great confidence in God's mercy. It would be impossible to forget the tone in which Father Bridgett, when something had been said regarding the uncertainty of salvation, utterly repudiated the idea that there was any uncertainty whatever. The truth was that he had been making for thirteen years a special preparation for his last hour. He well knew that the mercy of God is above all His works ; that God has commanded us to hope ; and that hope, being founded on faith, partakes of its certainty, so that hope and confidence are often spoken of in Holy Scripture under the name of faith : “ Why did you fear, O ye of little faith ? ” And again : “ If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you shall say to this mountain . . . remove . . . and it shall remove. . . . ” Knowing, too, how

displeasing to God is any want of confidence in Him, and that many souls fail in this matter, and that in the hour of death we are specially liable to temptations against Hope, he had composed a little treatise on Hope specially in preparation for his own death.¹ Hence he was so well grounded in all the true motives of perfect confidence in God's mercy that, in spite of his deep sense of his unworthiness, he never doubted for a moment that God would save him, and through the infinite merits of the Passion and Death of our Divine Lord bring him one day to His heavenly kingdom. His hope was truly magnificent—worthy of all that God has done for us. He recalled to mind that text of St Paul, where having told us that God, in order to give us a perfect and firm hope, had confirmed His promises with an oath, adds: "That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us. Which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, and which entereth in even within the veil; where the forerunner Jesus is entered for us, made a high priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Heb. vi. 18-20²).

¹ He called it the "Book of Hope" (see Appendix). He began writing it in 1886, thirteen years before his death. But his various infirmities already warned him of the approach of death. No doubt he remembered St Gregory's words, which we read so often in the Office for a Confessor: "*Venit quippe Dominus, cum ad iudicium properat: pulsat vero, cum jam per ægritudinis molestias esse mortem vicinam designat*" (St Greg. Hom. XIII. in Evangelia).

² As this certainty of theological Hope is a matter of the

Another special grace bestowed on him was his perfect resignation to God's most holy will, and his unconquerable patience in the midst of the darkness and desolation that succeeded his period of spiritual joy, and in the terrible sufferings and agonies he was called upon to endure. Without going into needless details, it will give some idea of what he endured to know that the night before an operation was performed the doctor spent from 11 P.M. till 2 A.M. in endeavouring to give him relief, but in vain. All this time, in spite of the greatest patience, gentleness, and skill on the part of this physician, Father Bridgett suffered such agonies that his groans and cries could be heard by those who were in neighbouring rooms, though the Infirmary was somewhat isolated. Father Bridgett was warned by the doctor not to suppress his cries, because the effort might have had a dangerous effect on his heart, which was already affected.¹ The operation,

greatest importance in the spiritual life, and as the present writer once heard a priest of considerable reputation for learning call in question the correctness of the expression, saying that you may speak of the certainty of Faith, but not of the certainty of Hope, it will be well to show how strictly theological the expression is. Schouppe in answer to the question: "*Quænam est Spei certitudo seu firmitas?*" replies: "*Certitudo alia est infallibilitatis, alia firmitatis.*" Then, after quoting St Thomas, he continues: "*Itaque certitudo infallibilitatis non invenitur nisi in intellectu; firmitatis vero etiam in voluntate inveniri potest; et hæc est spei certitudo, quæ etiam infrustrabilitas vocari potest. Hæc excludit timorem et fluctuationem a voluntate, sicut certitudo infallibilitatis excludit dubium et fluctuationem ab intellectu*" (Schouppe S. J. *Elementa Theol. Dogm. Tom. II. Tract xviii. De Virt. cap. II. Art. III. De Spe.*).

¹ We are glad to take this opportunity of bearing grateful testimony to the devoted self-sacrifice, as well as skill, displayed by Dr Atkinson. Ever since his partner, Dr Mahony, who

referred to above, mercifully put an end to the terrible agonies just described, but it was in itself a great trial. When it had been decided on by the doctor, one of the Fathers, who had heard it described as a very simple and easy operation, made little of it when speaking to Father Bridgett, no doubt wishing to encourage him. But the patient knew far too well what the operation meant, especially in his case. He knew that had it been described as being something akin to what the Blessed English Martyrs went through when condemned for high treason the speaker would have been nearer the mark. It really seemed as if this grace of being in some measure made like to them in their sufferings was the answer to the Novena made in their honour. He had always an attraction for the study of physiology, which for a while he had taught to the students at Teignmouth, and declared that he never thought of the human body without wonder and reverence, because it had been assumed by the Eternal Son of God. He, therefore, had an especial abhorrence of the operation in question, because he

had been for so many years our physician, as well as the devoted friend of our Community, had through advanced age and infirmity been unable to attend us, Dr Atkinson had taken his place. Father Bridgett was full of admiration and gratitude for all Dr Atkinson did for him—an admiration and gratitude we all shared. After Father Bridgett's death the following touching words were found written in pencil but a short time before his death:—"Dr Atkinson has been most assiduous, considerate, patient, and skilful. May God reward him with the light of Faith!" The Doctor, who is not a Catholic, will not, we are sure, object to this earnest prayer that God would grant him that gift which Father Bridgett valued more than all the riches of the world.

felt it was a kind of desecration of the wonderful mechanism bestowed on the human form by its Creator. He expressed this in very forcible, but amusing, language in a characteristic letter to a friend at a distance. The operation had no effect, of course, in relieving the continual pain of the internal cancer which was killing him.

The last grace we will mention was one which sprang from his humility and patience—namely, his extreme gratitude for all that was done for him, and his appreciation of the charity shown by his brethren of the Congregation in other Houses and even in other provinces, and likewise by his many friends outside the Congregation, both priests and laity. This charity moved him often to tears.

As already stated, the spiritual joy, which God granted him, lasted only for about five or six weeks, and then our Lord allowed him to share in His darkness and dereliction on His Cross. This he has expressed in some verses written on his deathbed. His old habit of making verses during his sleepless nights clung to him to the last. He found relief in putting his feelings into simple verse, partly at first written in pencil and partly dictated. They were headed :

MY LAST ILLNESS

(*Anointed October 14, 1898*)

My dear *confrère* into whose hands this paper may fall, do not be scandalised, as if I had wasted the precious hours of sickness in idle imaginations

and unrealities. The following lines are most real, and express what I intensely felt. I found, too, the arrangement of these simple rhymes a most efficient means of alleviating the weariness of sleepless hours and continuous pain ; and still more, of fixing my thoughts on meditation and prayer.

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

November 14, under the belief that the last hour had come :

“ Bid me come to Thee upon the Waters ”
(Matt. xiv. 28).

Great storms of anguish toss the sea,
The sprays of death break o'er my boat,
But through the mountain waves, to me
A Form Majestic seems to float.

I hear once more the Voice divine
“ 'Tis I,” it saith, “ be not afraid.”
The loving eyes upon me shine
That Peter's heart so daring made.

Lord Jesus, bid me come to Thee,
I fear not death, since Thou art Life :
Across the billows I will flee ;
Thy Name shall calm the water's strife.

Before the storm I will not quail ;
From heights or depths I will not shrink,
Yet, gentle Lord, should courage fail,
Stretch forth Thy hand before I sink.

November 23, on finding that probably many months of severe suffering would intervene before the end would come :

HOPE DEFERRED

“ When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said signifying by what death he should glorify God ” (John xxi. 18, 19).

My daring rapture could not last
 'Twas not the hour ordained to die ;
 The splendid vision from me passed,
 And now in helpless pain I lie.

Another scene I now behold—
 'Tis Peter and his risen Lord ;
 I hear the Apostle's protests bold,
 I hear his Master's gracious word.

“ Come follow Me ; stretch forth thy hands,
 And let another gird thee round ;
 And lead thee by constraining bands,
 Where self can be no longer found.”

So be it, Lord, to me ; my good
 Is that which seemeth good to Thee ;
 Yet help me, by Thy sweat of blood,
 To bear my lengthened misery.

January 1, 1899 :

“ Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ ” (Phil. i. 23).

Now sleepless nights and days of pain
 Have dragged their weary course along.
 With languid heart and feeble brain
 I fain would sing a lowly song.

Hail, Jesus, sorrowful to death ;
Hail, Lord of Life, in agony ;
Hail trembling limbs and panting breath,
Have pity, Jesus, now on me.

I fain would be dissolved and die,
United with my Saviour's Cross ;
Though weak and helpless here I lie,
I know my profit and my loss.

My trembling soul I now commit
To Thy pierced hands and open side.
My soul receive, my sins remit,
O God and Saviour crucified !

By God's merciful Providence, during the last few days his physical exhaustion, together with the remedies prescribed by the physician, seemed to render him less susceptible of pain. The Rector, in order to allow the overworked brother infirmarian to obtain some rest, watched by him during the night preceding his death. Father Bridgett, as a part of his careful preparation for death, already alluded to, had carefully written a long list of aspirations, to which he had a devotion, and which he wished to have suggested to him. On that last night they proved quite useless, as the mind was wandering. It was clear that nothing could be done but pray for him, and strive to give him what physical relief was possible. The next day, Friday, February 17, 1899, at about 4.15 in the afternoon, the end came. He rose up in a sitting posture, stretched out his arms as though welcoming someone, apparently for the moment perfectly himself, and then, sinking

back, breathed forth his soul in perfect peace into the hands of his loving Saviour. The Rector was standing by him at the moment, and gave him the last Absolution, so that his soul might pass, as it were, through a bath of the Most Precious Blood, and enter spotless into the presence of his God.

So did this truly good and great man die—"great in heart as in intellect, the kindest of the kind, and the humblest of the humble," as one who knew him for years has called him.

The body was removed to St Mary's on Monday evening about 7.30. Then the Office for the Dead was recited. Afterwards the Rosary was publicly said for the repose of his soul. On Tuesday morning the solemn Requiem was sung in presence of the Cardinal Archbishop. His Eminence gave the Absolutions at the end. The body was then conveyed to Mortlake cemetery, where the Very Rev. Father Bennett, Provincial of the Redemptorists, read the burial service, the Father Rector and other Fathers assisting, together with a considerable number of the parishioners.

We cannot end this sketch of Father Bridgett's life better than by the following lines, wherein he warns us all, both priests and people, not to forget to pray for our departed friends:—

MASS FOR THE DEAD

Oh ! write not on the tombstones both of sinner
and of Saint,
That all alike have gone to God without an earthly
taint ;

'Tis a lie you tell the living, 'tis a mockery of the
dead,
'Tis an outrage to the holy God, most holy and
most dread ;
'Tis dishonour to the blessed lips of Him from whom
we heard
That we shall give account to God for every idle
word.
Yet hope we for our brother, though his life was
foul to see,
And fear we for our brother, though a saint he
seemed to be ;
The sinner may have wept for sin, though we know
not when or how,
And the saint must be unblemished ere he lift his
crownèd brow.
Let us pray, and let us offer the all-prevailing
Mass,
While through the cleansing flames to God the
ransomed spirits pass.
O Priest, thy brother's helper, remember thou art
clay,
Pray for the souls departed, and for thy own soul
pray.

(“ Lyra Hieratica,” p. 114.)

CHRONOLOGICAL INDEX OF FATHER BRIDGETT'S LIFE

| | | |
|-------|-----------|---|
| 1829. | Jan. 20. | Birth. |
| 1850. | June 12. | Reception into the Church. |
| „ | Sept. 29. | Joins the Redemptorist Noviciate. |
| „ | Oct. 15. | Receives the Habit. |
| 1851. | Oct. 15. | Is Professed and goes to Wittem. |
| 1856. | Aug. 4. | Is ordained Priest. |
| „ | Aug. 25. | Returns to Clapham. |
| 1862. | May 12. | Goes to Limerick. |
| 1865. | May 24. | Is made Rector at Limerick. |
| 1868. | May. | Reappointed Rector. |
| 1871. | July 11. | Becomes Rector at Clapham. |
| 1874. | June 21. | Goes to Bishop Eton. |
| 1877. | July 3. | Goes to Clapham. |
| 1880. | Jan. | Goes to Bishop Eton. |
| 1881. | June. | Becomes Rector at Limerick. |
| 1884. | May. | Goes to Clapham. |
| 1893. | May 3. | Becomes Rector at Teignmouth. |
| 1894. | Nov. 19. | Goes to Clapham. |
| 1898. | Oct. 14. | Receives Extreme Unction. |
| 1899. | Feb. 17 | Dies at St Mary's, Clapham. <i>R.I.P.</i> |

APPENDIX I

BOOK OF HOPE

COMPOSED BY FATHER BRIDGETT IN 1886 AS A SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR DEATH, AND USED BY HIM ON HIS DEATHBED THIRTEEN YEARS LATER.¹

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DIGNITY OF THE ELECT.

ASSOCIATION.

ABSENCE OF EVIL MEN.

THE PRESENCE OF THE SAVIOUR.

THE VISION OF GOD.

HEAVEN IS LIFE : HOW GAINED.

¹ Only a few days before his death he wrote in pencil the following words:—"This little book is too crude or too compressed. It would admit of much development, and furnish matter for an interesting book on a subject not sufficiently considered by Christians. I should be very glad could it serve such a purpose.—T. E. B., February 2, 1899." Later, in fainter pencil, he added: "Perhaps, however, it would be better to cast it into a series of short meditations than into a dissertation." Lastly, along the margin, he wrote: "But it will be better kept for private use."

THE VIRTUE OF HOPE

“OUR Saviour Jesus Christ hath destroyed death and hath brought to light life and incorruption by the gospel, in which I am appointed a preacher” (2 Tim. i. 10). So wrote St Paul, and I too in this nineteenth century have succeeded in my poor degree to the preaching of the same Gospel. The Apostle, ravished to the third Heaven, had learnt what was the nature of this “life and incorruption.” I must learn it from him, and from his Master’s words, and from those of his brother Apostles.

Why have I paid so little attention to the nature of that future life? Not, I think, from want of faith in it; for what other motive have I had in life since my conversion to the faith, more than thirty-six years ago, than the acquisition of eternal life? Imperfect and sinful, tepid and inconsistent as I have been, yet I may truly say I should not have remained one day or hour in religion, in my life as a Redemptorist, but for that hope. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable” (1 Cor. xv. 19).

And yet how little time or study have I given to that future life in which I believe and hope! I have read many volumes of travels in equatorial and Arctic regions where I never expected to go. I have read with interest what travellers and naturalists report of every country on this earth. Even in this year, 1886, I have visited with delight three or four times the great Indian and Colonial Exhibition, and examined the natural, industrial, and artistic productions of the Empire of Great Britain. Why, then, have I not read and thought and asked more about the Eternal Empire of Jesus Christ, to which I hope one day to travel, and in which to dwell for ever?

The reason is that I thought little was to be learnt, little was revealed, except in general, vague, mystic words, which I already knew from having read them in the Gospels and Epistles, and of which it would be of little use to seek to penetrate the meaning more deeply. It seemed almost as vain to guess beforehand the nature of that future life as for the chrysalis to dream of the life of the butterfly.

But I have just now turned over all the pages of the New Testament, and noted whatever is said of the object of my hope and of hope itself, and I am convinced I have been wrong. Heaven is not a subject for the fancy, but is certainly a subject for contemplation. The human chrysalis in its dream can learn much, and *prepare also to make a grander butterfly*, by dwelling on the various mystic words spoken of that future life, by bringing them together, and letting the one supplement the other. For mere simple faith we certainly are not bound to read, and to collate, all that inspired pens have written. Yet when the Church gives the "man of God" all those Divine books, he should by diligent study thereof and meditation therein, seek to make himself "perfect," and to "furnish himself with every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

If we must "hold fast the *confession of our Hope* without wavering, for He is faithful that has promised" (Heb. x. 23), it cannot but be good to dwell long and lovingly on these promises, and on His fidelity. St Paul thanked God for his converts among the Colossians, "hearing of their *faith* in Christ Jesus, and the *love* which they had towards all the saints, *for the Hope that was laid up for them in Heaven* ; which [he says] you have heard in the word of the truth of the Gospel" (Col. i. 4, 5). This Hope then, founded on a firm faith in its truth, is fruitful in love. So the Apostle exhorts them

still more "to *seek* the things that are above . . . to *mind* the things that are above" (Col. iii. 1, 2). It is a "*blessed Hope*, for the fruition of which we must '*wait*' while we live soberly, justly and piously in this world" (Tit. ii. 12, 13). The Apostle tells the Hebrews that "God is not unjust that He should forget their good works and love," and He "desires that everyone should show forth the same carefulness *to the accomplishing of Hope to the end* that you become not slothful . . . for God, meaning more abundantly to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, interposed an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have the *strongest comfort*, who have fled for refuge, to *hold fast the Hope* set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, and which entereth in even within the veil" (Heb. vi. 10-19). How applicable is all this to our own days! One can see in Tennyson's *In Memoriam* how souls are tossed about on the waters of speculation, between fear and hope, having no anchor. Darwin, in a letter published after his death, acknowledged that he believed in no revelation, that "as to a future life we must make our choice between vague and conflicting probabilities." These are the storms from which "we have fled for refuge," and in God's word have a sure anchor. The anchor is thrown, not down, but up, and "behind the veil"; but as by soundings the sailor makes sure that he has good anchorage, so we should make soundings, or rather liftings, of the mind and heart to assure ourselves how "sure and firm" is our anchor in the hand of God.

St Peter, too, says that we are regenerated unto a *lively Hope* (1 Pet. i. 3), and exhorts us: "Having the loins of our mind girded and being sober, to *hope* perfectly in the grace which is offered to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 13).

Now, this Hope, this "lively" Hope, "sure and firm" Hope, "perfect" Hope, is a grace. Satan endeavours to rob us of it by "the seduction of iniquity, if we have not the *love of truth*" (2 Thess. ii. 10); but, on the other hand, St Paul prays "our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God and our Father who hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation, and *good hope* in grace" to "*exhort your hearts*" and "confirm you in every good work and word" (*Ibid.* 15, 16).

O loving Apostle St Paul, you tell us that when on earth you ceased not to pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give to your converts the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of their heart being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints (Eph. i. 16-18). O loving heart of St Paul, now that thou art entered behind the veil, and possessest the riches of that glory in the vision of God, pray for us poor, storm-tost travellers, pray for me in the dimness of my sensual and worldly heart, that God in His mercy would enlighten it to know the hope of my calling. And do thou also, O Mother of Mercy, whose Magnificat is a Canticle of Hope as well as of Faith and love and gratitude, get for me that hunger of heart which God will fill with good things *sicut locutus est ad patres nostros*.

WHAT HEAVEN IS

Salvation, Redemption, Liberation, Incorruption

The future Life in Heaven is frequently alluded to as a state of Salvation, the state of such as have escaped ruin and destruction, just as reaching port is being saved from the perils of the ocean

and risk of shipwreck, or rather as the being carried to land in the lifeboat is being saved from actual shipwreck and imminent death. Thus St Peter says: "If the just man shall *scarcely be saved*, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 18).

Salvation is sometimes spoken of as a work already done by God, our Lord Jesus Christ; sometimes as a work still being done by God, or to be done and revealed by Him in future; and sometimes as a work to be done by ourselves through the aid of God.

I have not now to consider how our Divine Redeemer merited Salvation for us, nor precisely how He is now applying Salvation to us by His grace, but what is the Salvation we look for after death.

It is evident that to appreciate Salvation we must have realised the danger we ran or the misery and ruin from which we have been rescued. But on the slavery of the passions of this life, and the punishment of sin in the next, I will not now dwell in detail.

"You shall be hated by all men for My name's sake, but he that shall persevere to the end, *he shall be saved*" (Matt. x. 22). Hated, persecuted of all, and that to the end of life, and *then* saved! Saved then, *not* from hatred and persecution of men, but from the hatred and wrath of God. Knowing this, St Paul devoted himself to suffer even such hatred and persecution as he might have escaped had he been merely intent on saving his own soul: "I labour even unto chains as an evil-doer: (but the word of God is not bound) therefore I suffer all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory. A faithful saying, for if we be dead with Him we shall live also with Him;

if we suffer we shall also reign. If we deny Him He will also deny us " (2 Tim. ii. 9-12).

This Salvation, then, that is to follow after labour, suffering, and death, what is it? "A faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance; that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners of whom I am the chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). To save *sinners*. Sometimes the holy writers speak of faithful men, hopeful men, loving men being saved, and unbelieving, despairing, slothful, obstinate, sinful men being lost, as in the words above quoted: "If we deny Him He will deny us." But these things are easy to reconcile. The sinner who perseveres in sin cannot be saved, since the very thing from which he is to be saved is sin. The sinner, then, is saved, as the lifeboat saves the drowning man; but it is the faithful, trustful, loving man who is saved, just as, among the drowning, it is those who grasp the hand or the rope, who climb into the boat, who help to row to shore. St James says: "Casting away all uncleanness, with meekness receive the engrafted word which is able to save your souls; but be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James i. 21, 22). "Confess therefore your sins one to another and pray for one another that you may be saved" (James v. 16). So St Peter says that baptism does now save us, as the ark saved Noe and his family, but not those who mocked at the coming flood (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21).

This saving from sin is not merely from the punishment, but from the guilt and stain and the disorder and all evil consequences. This must be begun in this life, though some of the purification may still have to be undergone after death.

The consummation is to be made at last *spotless, perfect, and incorrupt*, as I will consider by-and-by. "The creature also itself" (*i.e.* even the irrational material world) "shall be *delivered* from the servi-

tude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God " (Rom. viii. 21). If God's inanimate creatures long for the time when they shall be delivered from the slavery of being abused by sinners, and when they shall fulfil their real end in the hands of God's free and glorious children, how much more ought we to sigh for the time when we shall cease to be tempted by creatures or to misuse them, and shall have perfect liberty as God's children !

The Holy Spirit within us is " the Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance " (Eph. i. 13, 14). " Grieve not," says the Apostle " the Holy Spirit, whereby you are *sealed* unto the *day of redemption* " (Eph. iv. 30) ; and then he goes on to warn against anger and uncharitableness and impurity and injustice, which exclude from all inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph. v. 1-5), because they *break the seal*, and drive from us the Holy Spirit.

This perfect freedom from sin, this full possession of our soul by the Holy Spirit, is the great object of our Hope. This is the " inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not," which is " reserved in Heaven " for us, if " by the power of God we are kept by faith unto Salvation ready to be revealed in the last time " (1 Pet. i. 4, 5). " The end of our faith is the Salvation of our souls, concerning which Salvation the prophets have inquired and diligently searched " (*Ibid.* 9, 10).

Into this Salvation we must *grow*, says St Peter, as infants grow by eagerly taking milk ; so must we desire the rational milk without guile (1 Pet. ii. 2). For this Salvation we must *work*, says St Paul ; or rather this Salvation already in us we must develop and work out. " Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish,

according to His good will " (Phil. ii. 12, 13). How should we not fear and tremble when we are working with God, and working at such a work, and when by our sloth or waywardness or blundering we may mar His work in and for us, which He will do according to His good will, and not according to our caprice?

Oh, how horrible is all heresy, all schism—the overthrow of God's Salvation! "But you, my dearest," wrote St Jude, "be mindful of the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who told you that in the last time should come mockers, walking according to their own desires in impieties. *These are they who separate themselves*, sensual men, having not the Spirit. But you, my dearest, building yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ unto life everlasting " (Jude 17-21).

Faith then (the true faith of the Holy Catholic Church), and *Hope* (showing itself in prayer in the Holy Ghost and in expectation of Heaven), and *Love* to God and to man, and *Fear* and trembling while we co-operate with God—these are the working out of Salvation. But fear and trembling may not exclude joy and confidence and boldness. Hence the Apostle twice calls the hope of Salvation a *helmet* (Eph. vi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 8). "Let us who are of the day be sober, having on the breastplate of faith and charity and for a helmet the hope of Salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to the purchasing of Salvation by Our Lord Jesus Christ." The helmet makes the soldier hold up his head proudly and boldly. So also said Our Lord to His Apostles: "You shall be hated of all. . . . In your patience you shall possess your souls. . . . And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed

about with an army . . . these are the days of vengeance . . . and when there shall be signs in the sun and moon . . . and men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world, then *look up and lift up your heads* because your redemption is at hand ” (Luke xxi. 17-28).

But if Salvation is principally deliverance from sin, it is also deliverance from all sorrow and misery. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted ; blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy ” (Matt. v. 5, 7). “I am the Bread of life. He that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst ” (John vi. 35). “Therefore they are before the throne of God . . . they shall not hunger, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun fall on them nor any heat . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ” (Apoc. vii. 15-17).

Perfection, Completion, Consummation

The future life promised to us is not merely deliverance from evil, but the completion of everything good, though imperfect, here below. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice for they shall be filled ” (Matt. v. 6). “In the Resurrection they shall be as the angels of God in heaven ” (Matt. xxii. 30). Our Lord was speaking more immediately of virginal purity ; but the words of St John lift us to our Lord Himself : “Dearly Beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear *we shall be like Him*, because we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him sanctifieth himself, as He also is holy ” (1 John iii. 2, 3).

“We see now through a glass in an obscure

manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known " (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

"The *body* also of our lowness will be reformed, made like to the body of His glory, according to the operation whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21). Here I may well call to mind our Divine Redeemer's miracles when on earth, and His own glory as He walked the sea, or shone in His transfiguration, or rose from the tomb, and His life on earth after the resurrection and before His ascension. And I may think how He called St Paul up to Him in the third heaven—whether in the body or out he could not tell. No wonder that this Apostle says that afterwards he groaned at his earthly state. "We who are in the tabernacle do groan being burdened, because we would not be unclothed but clothed over, that what is mortal may be swallowed up in life" (2 Cor. v. 4).

Perfect Joy

Then will come what the Apostle calls "everlasting peace" (2 Thess. iii. 16). Then we "enter into *the joy* of the Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21); then our own joy will be perfect: "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man shall take from you" (John xvi. 22). Then seeing Him in whom we have believed, and whom we have loved, "we shall rejoice with an *unspeakable and glorified joy*" (1 Pet. i. 8).

"Rejoice," said the same Apostle, "in being partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that when His glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with *exceeding joy*" (1 Pet. iv. 13). What is this gladness but what our Lord called laughter? "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh"

(Luke vi. 21). The laughter of Paradise, the laughter of God, eternal laughter of ineffable joy. Our Lord Himself compares Heaven to a feast. Oh ! good God, our pagan forefathers thought of their Walhalla as a place of perpetual carousing and perpetual fighting ; and many literary men of our own day seem to admire this conception as at least manly, and have no word of praise for the Heavenly Laughter of Christ, of Him who wept over our earthly miseries.

Well, St Paul calls it "the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to His Saints, to whom God would make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the Hope of glory. Whom we preach admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present *every man perfect* in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 26-28).

The Abode of Joy

These redeemed and perfect men are to be gathered in an abode which is variously described. "I go," said our Lord, "to prepare a place for you. In My Father's house there are many mansions" (John xiv. 2) ; "everlasting dwellings" (Luke xvi. 9). But the elect are not so much to dwell in God's house as to be God's house, wherein He will dwell. "Christ," says the Apostle, "is as a son in his own house ; which house are we if we retain a firm confidence and the glory of Hope unto the end" (Heb. iii. 6). "We know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in Heaven" (2 Cor. v. 1).

This abode is also called a *city*. "You are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of

many thousands of angels " (Heb. xii. 22). " Here we have no permanent city, but we seek one to come " (Heb. xiii. 14). And St John in vision saw " the Holy City Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, having the glory of God " (Apoc. xxi. 10). It was " prepared as a bride for her husband, and I heard a great voice from the throne saying ' behold the tabernacle of God with men and He will dwell with them ; and they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God ' " (*Ibid.* 2, 3).

It is more commonly called a *Kingdom* : " Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven " (Matt. v. 3, 10). " Come ye blessed of my Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world " (Matt. xxv. 34). " Labour," says St Peter, " that by good works you may make sure your vocation and election, for doing these things you shall not sin at any time ; for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ " (2 Pet. i. 10, 11).

The same Apostle tells us that when this world shall have been consumed " we look for a new heaven and a new earth according to His promise, in which justice dwelleth " (2 Pet. iii. 13).

Everything in these symbolic words—house, city, kingdom—suggests the power, wisdom, majesty, magnificence, eternity of God, and the perfect peace and joy and stability of His elect.

Dignity of the Elect

The least are great, for they *possess* the kingdom : they reign with God ; but there are some great even among the great : " Whosoever shall do and

teach, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. v. 19). "You who have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28). Yet there are *thrones*, or there is a throne, for all: "To him that shall overcome I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, as I also have overcome and have sat with My Father in His Throne" (Apoc. iii. 21). What blasphemous words if spoken by anyone but Jesus Christ; what gracious, glorious words coming from Him! His Apostles, therefore, could echo them: "If we suffer we shall reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). Where there is a throne there is usually a *crown*; so the bliss and dignity of the Saints is called by that name. It is not only the "incorruptible crown" of the victorious athlete in the divine games (1 Cor. ix. 25), but it is a princely crown. The faithful pastors shall receive from the Prince of pastors "a never fading crown of glory" (1 Pet. v. 4).

Glory, indeed, is the special name of the bliss and dignity of the Saints. "The God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself perfect and confirm and establish you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever. Amen." So says St Peter (1 Pet. v. 10, 11). Therefore God's prerogative of glory is to be shared by His Saints. "To the only God be honour and glory," says St Paul (1 Tim. i. 17); yet he bids us "seek glory and honour and incorruption" (Rom. ii. 7), and tells us that "our present tribulation which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). The same Apostle assures us that our future glory and God's glory are identical: "We testified to every one of you that you should walk worthy of God, *who hath called you to His*

kingdom and glory " (1 Thess. ii. 12). So St Peter spoke of himself as "an ancient (or elder) and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of that glory which is to be revealed in time to come" (1 Pet. v. 1).

Association

In almost every passage of Scripture where Heaven is mentioned the idea of company—society—is included.

Our Lord says He will "gather together His elect from the four winds" (Matt. xxiv. 31). "Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. viii. 11). St Jude calls it a "common salvation" (Jude 3). St Paul says the Saints of the old dispensation "could not be perfected without us" (Heb. xi. 40), and now they form "a great cloud of witnesses over us" while we run to the contest (Heb. xii. 1). The same Apostle reminded St Philemon that his slave may have run away from him for a time, in God's design, that by his conversion to the faith "he might receive him for ever" (Phil. 15). "The coming of Our Lord will be with all His Saints" (1 Thess. iii. 13). He shall "come to be glorified in His Saints and to be made wonderful in all them that have believed" (2 Thess. i. 10).

Yet the glory of our Lord and His company will not so absorb the glorified as to hinder in any way their mutual intercourse and glory. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory?" asks St Paul. "Are not you, in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thess. ii. 19). And reciprocally "we [the Apostles] are your glory, as you also are ours on the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. i. 14).

If Heaven were this alone, the company of all that has been really good and perfect on this earth, what a thought, what a hope ! It is true that much that we have admired on earth, beautiful in form, in intellect, will then be absent. But mere intellect before God is no more than the hues and perfume of the flower that to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven ; and so it will be seen by us in that day. There will be absent, too, some in whom was natural virtue, very beautiful to behold—aye, and some who had once been saints, but had not persevered to the end. Alas ! shall we not miss these ? No ; in the vision of God we shall see that nothing is lost but by its own fault and by becoming worthless ; for “ Christ loved the Church . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish ” (Eph. v. 27). It would not be without blemish if any good thing were missing to it, any more than if anything found in it were defective. Everything that should be in Heaven will be there ; of this we must be sure, though as yet we cannot understand it.

Absence of Evil Men

One thing, however, is awfully conspicuous in everything said about Heaven : it is the land of beauty by the casting into the fire of all noxious weeds, and *not* by their final conversion into flowers, and by the draining away into the cess-pools of hell of all foul waters, *not* by their being finally changed into sweet and living fountains.

As there is a marvellous unanimity in all the Holy Writers in their pictures of Heaven, so also in their contrasts with the fate of the wicked. And in both respects they do but develop their Master's words. His beatitudes were followed by woes,

evidently as eternal as the former (Luke vi. 24-26). The generation that would neither dance when piped to, nor lament with the mourners, shall have a judgment worse than that of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom (Matt. xi. 16, 23); the blessed are called to possess the kingdom, but the cursed depart into everlasting fire.

So St Paul tells the Thessalonians that "*rest*" is in store for them "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with the angels of His power, in a flame of fire, giving vengeance to them who know not God and who obey not the Gospel, who shall suffer eternal pains in destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints" (2 Thess i. 7-10).

St Peter says that "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, but also how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented" . . . for the "clouds tossed with whirlwinds the mist of darkness is reserved" (2 Pet. ii. 9, 17).

St John says that "there is a sin unto death" for which we need not pray (1 John v. 16); St James speaks of those who "store up for themselves wrath against the last days" (James v. 3); and St Jude of the "wandering stars to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever" (Jude 13).

Why do men persist in closing their eyes to all this? If this can be explained away, or that these reprobates may have another chance, then the security of the blessed may be explained away, so that they may risk another fall.

And if the Apostles erred in their estimate of eternal destruction, then they may have erred in their hopes of eternal life, and both Heaven and Hell are dreams, and a future life itself is reduced, as Darwin said to "vague and conflicting pro-

babilities," and so "let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die." Away with these horrid and impious thoughts !

Heaven is the Presence of our Saviour

Heaven is not merely salvation from wrath and sin and from the company of the wicked, it is the enjoyment of the presence and love of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Our life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear who is our life then we also shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4).

Our Divine Lord prayed: "Father, I will that where I am they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24).

"If we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them who have slept through Jesus, God will bring *with Him* . . . we shall meet Christ in the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 13, 16). Hence the loving St Paul "desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23).

Heaven is the Vision of God

But "the blessed hope" is "the coming of the glory of the great God and Our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. ii. 13), when He "will confess His own before God" (Matt. x. 32), which implies that they will see the God who acknowledges them. They confessed Him whom they did not see before the face of visible, scoffing men; as a reward He will confess them before a visible, approving God.

They will "know as they are known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12); they will be "spotless *before His presence*

with exceeding joy" (Jude 24); they will be "before His throne" (Apoc. vii. 15); they will "enter into His joy" (Matt. xxv. 21); He will be "the God of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32); they will have that "holiness, without which no man can *see God*" (Heb. xii. 14); they will be "clean of heart" and will "see God" (Matt. v. 8); they will "behold the glory of the Lord with face uncovered, and be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18); they will "be like Him because they will see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

Heaven is Life: how gained

Now, all this salvation, perfection, bliss, and possession of God is called emphatically *life* (Matt. xix. 17-30); abundant life (John x. 10); life eternal, everlasting—a crown of life (James i. 12); and we read of the Book of Life (Apoc. iii. 5), in which the heirs of life are written (Tit. iii. 7), and the Tree of Life (Apoc. xxii. 2, 14), of which those eat who have washed their robes in the Blood of the Lamb.

The Holy Writers describe this life sometimes as a gift of God, an inheritance, and sometimes as a reward, and often the two expressions are united (Col. iii. 24). It is God's gift, since He created it for us, and us for it. He purchased it for us, when it was lost, by His death; He alone by His grace enables us to merit it.

But for adults the condition of receiving the inheritance is to merit it by good works. "If you would enter into life," said our Lord, "keep the Commandments" (Matt. xix. 17). If we bear calumny for our Lord's sake we shall have a great *reward* (Matt. v. 11, 12).

St Paul calls it a deposit which he has committed to our Lord's keeping, to be repaid him after death

(2 Tim. i. 12); St James calls it a crown of life (James i. 12); St Peter a never fading crown (1 Pet. v. 4); St Paul a crown of justice which the just Judge will give him.

It is a harvest (James v. 7); we must sow that we may reap blessings (2 Cor. ix. 6); what things a man shall sow those shall he reap (Gal. vi. 8); and we must "reap life everlasting" (*Ibid.*).

If we give alms, fast, pray as we should, God will *repay* us openly (Matt. vi.). We must lay up for ourselves treasure in Heaven (Matt. vi. 20). If we make ourselves poor for God's love we shall have treasure in Heaven (Matt. xix. 21, 29). We must trade with the pounds that we may have cities (Luke xix. 19). It is a Kingdom promised to those who love, says St James (ii. 5). It is to be laid hold of by means of the good fight of faith (1 Tim. vi. 12). We are to lay up a store of good works, says St Paul (1 Tim. vi. 19). "Look to yourselves," says St John, "that you lose not the things that you have wrought, but that you receive a full reward" (2 John 8).

If St Paul says that he hopes to be found in Christ, not having his justice, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 9), he is speaking of works without faith and without grace, not worked through our Lord's Redemption; but as to Christian works, he immediately compares himself to a man in a race pursuing towards the mark for the prize (Phil. iii. 14).

We must enter into this life by living maimed here below if necessary (Matt. v. 30). It is thus cheaply gained.

Surely all these ineffable things, that we can as yet only dimly conceive, are thus revealed to us in so many ways, in order that our hearts may be comforted and strengthened and inflamed. God grant it.

Mater sanctæ spei, ora pro nobis.

APPENDIX II

APOSTOLIC PREACHERS

The following extract from an Article by Cardinal Wiseman, in The Dublin Review for February 1840, was given by Father Bridgett to Mgr. Croke Robinson, and is referred to on page 120.

CERTAINLY the way in which those who have leisure and ability for it could best concur in the twofold work of charity—that of relieving their more oppressed brethren, and that of diffusing the knowledge of truth—would be by devoting themselves to preparation for the pulpit—the most powerful means of conversion.

It is certain that in all Catholic countries the custom prevails of relieving the local clergy, at certain stated seasons of greater occupation, of the laborious duty of the pulpit, and at the same time giving the people the benefit of hearing the word of God preached, if not in better, in more carefully prepared discourses, than the regular pastor can provide. The best of our feelings, as of our senses, feed upon variety; neither the eye nor the mind will resist weariness if always met by the same forms of things. They may be beautiful as you please—bright, cheering, and sympathetic—but after a time you will want relief even from less perfect objects. No one, not the most eloquent man on earth, will continue to address for years the same assembly without either gradually wearing out at least the most striking of his thoughts or begetting that familiarity with his mode, which, if it breeds not contempt, at least diminishes awe. It is a wonderful relief to both preacher and audience to

have from time to time someone stepping in between them whose turn of thought will necessarily have the charm of variety ; whose leisure has enabled him to elaborate his discourses with accuracy and vigour ; whose mature meditation has prepared them in a well-supported complete series ; and who, independent of a thousand local influences, and personal delicacies resulting from position, can urge home points on which the resident instructor may but lightly touch, and cut up by the root abuses which from prudence he can only gently attempt to top and prune. The great and stirring truths of religion, coming thus powerfully enforced by the voice of one the lines of whose character are not so familiar to the hearers, at seasons when the whole service and feeling of the Church invite and help to serious reflection, could not fail of producing corresponding effects.

But such a gift is not granted to all, nor to many. It is, therefore, so much the more valuable, and should be, therefore, the more turned to account. If "the word of the Lord is precious" in our days, as it was in those of Samuel, those should be put to good use to whom it hath been given in power. In other words, their abilities should be made available to as many persons and as many places as possible. . . .

Ought not all false shame to be put aside, and ought not anyone who believes himself able, by God's blessing, to go through such a fatiguing Mission with some prospect of success, to step forward, and tender his services to his bishop, to be so employed ? Ought not every one, whose studies have led him to particular attention to the controversies of the day, and who, having exhausted the results of his researches upon his own limited charge, has found their effects beneficial, to be willing, and even anxious, to carry them where they may be profitable to many more, and where

he may have fruit, as St Paul desired to have, in more distant churches?

And if he found that blessing attended his disinterested labours, wherever he had a point of support in a Catholic congregation already existing, and where he had the friendly shelter of a Catholic roof over his head, would he not be tempted to try a bolder and more apostolic step? And with something of that spirit—though ennobled and hallowed by his cause—which animated the first mariner that ventured to leave the shore along which he and his predecessors had till then crept, and boldly committed his frail barque to the broad sea, trusting in God, and fixing his eyes upon some bright star to guide him, confidently but prudently strike into regions comparatively unexplored by the Catholic faith, and seek, where none have ever sought before, sheep for the fold of Christ his Master?

We own that such a step would be the most decisive yet taken in the discharge of the ecclesiastical ministry since the days when persecution against us ceased. We feel that it would require extreme tact and delicacy, considerable moral courage, great readiness and practice in speaking, and varied fund of knowledge. It would require much of that apostolic faculty of being all to all, that all might be gained; a just mixture in the character of firmness and affability, of calmness and ardour, a sacred enthusiasm without a tinge of fanaticism, a zeal pure from all rancour, a boldness without bitterness—in a word, the spirit of a St Francis de Sales when preaching in the Chablais. But no spirit is so sublime as not to be within the compass of the Catholic's reach when animated by the sublimest of motives—Charity.

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